

Die Adressaten des Weisheitsbuches

Das Buch der Weisheit nennt weder seinen Autor noch seine Adressaten. Wenn dieses Buch auf Grund sprachlicher und inhaltlicher Vergleiche z. B. Philo von Alexandrien zugeschrieben wird, so gibt dieses Urteil sicherlich triftige Gründe für eine wahrscheinliche Datierung des Werkes zu erkennen⁽¹⁾. Bei aller Ähnlichkeit, die die Schriften Philo und Weish aufweisen, unterscheiden sie sich in ihrem Selbstverständnis wesentlich. Die Schriften Philo gelten als auktoriale Werke, die ihren Urheber zu erkennen geben. Dieser verfügt über sein Werk, auch wenn er darin eine unverfügbare, religiöse Dimension anerkennt. Anders im Buch der Weish, hier wird kein Zweifel daran gelassen, dass der Urheber des Werkes schon von allem Anfang an in die Dimension des Unverfügbaren eingetaucht ist. Der Autor tritt in den Hintergrund, er stellt sich in den Dienst der empfangenen göttlichen Botschaft. Diese ist kein Novum und kann daher als Wiederhall längst vergangener Zeiten gehört werden. Eine 'typische' Person der Vergangenheit darf als Künder dieser Botschaft inszeniert werden. Will man in der literarischen Gestaltung von Weish König Salomo als Urheber der Botschaft sehen, so ändert das nichts daran, dass der Aspekt des Unverfügbaren im Gegensatz zur Schrift als Eigentum des Autors im Vordergrund steht. Dies sagt freilich noch nichts darüber aus, ob sich hinter diesem sprachlichen Kostüm nicht doch eine gezielte Strategie zugunsten der persönlichen Zwecke des Autors verbirgt. In einem solchen Fall müßte man von einer Fälschung sprechen⁽²⁾.

⁽¹⁾ G. SCARPAT (a cura di), *Libro della Sapienza*. Testo, traduzione, introduzione e commento (Biblica. Testi e studi 1,3,6; Brescia 1989-1999) II, 7-8, begründet in seiner Kommentierung von Weish die zahlreichen Verweise auf Texte der Schriften Philo mit einer ähnlichen Abfassungszeit.

⁽²⁾ Zur literarischen Fälschung siehe W. SPEYER, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum*. Ein Versuch ihrer Deutung (HAW I/2; München 1971). Auf den Seiten 150-168 geht Speyer auf die Fälschungen bei den Juden ein und erwähnt dabei auch die 'Weisheit Salomos' (S. 166). Dass Weish als Fälschung im Dienst jüdischer Apologetik gestanden habe, als solche bei den Griechen für das Judentum zu werben suchte und von der christlichen Kirche nicht als Fälschung durchschaut wurde, da sie vielfach christlichen Wünschen entsprach (vgl. S. 155, 158), wird vieles für sich haben. Dennoch möchte ich den Begriff 'Fälschung' für das Buch der Weish vermeiden, da die Zuweisung an Salomo der Schrift des hebräischen und griechischen Kanons Qohelet (1,1) vergleichbar ist und

Clemens von Alexandrien, der erste mit Sicherheit auszumachende Rezipient des Weisheitsbuches, hat einen Teil dieser Schrift als autoritativ zitiert und somit als echt anerkannt⁽³⁾. Die Christen der folgenden Jahrhunderte sind im großen und ganzen dieser Einschätzung Clemens' gefolgt⁽⁴⁾. Im 'Judentum' des 2. Jh. n. Chr. und später wird das Weisheitsbuch zumindest nicht als heilige, kanonische Schrift verstanden und im Grunde nicht rezipiert. Die ersten Rezipienten von Weish sind somit die Christen Alexandriens. Dies überrascht umso mehr, weil sich christliche Spuren im Buch der Weish nicht ausfindig machen lassen. Die Christen können daher kaum die Erstadressaten von Weish gewesen sein. Für wen hat dann der Autor von Weish geschrieben? Welches soziale Ambiente läßt sich für die Erstadressaten dieser Schrift ausmachen? Diesen Fragen soll im folgenden nachgegangen werden.

I. Heiden als Adressaten von Weish?

Wenn die Christen zu den sicheren Rezipienten von Weish zu rechnen sind, wenn zu den Christen auch heidnische, d.h. nicht-jüdische Mitglieder gerechnet werden müssen, so erscheint es durchaus sinnvoll, Heiden als ursprüngliche Adressaten der Weish

das apologetische Anliegen in Weish nicht exklusiv oder dominant vorherrscht. Eine Übersicht zur Textstrategie 'Pseudonymität' in Weish 1,1–6,21; 6,22–10,21 und 11–19 bietet D. DIMANT, "Pseudonymity in the Wisdom of Solomon", *La Septuaginta en la investigación contemporánea* (ed. N. FERNÁNDEZ MARCOS) (Textos y Estudios 'Cardenal Cisneros' 34; Madrid 1985) 243–255. Zum Thema 'Pseudepigraphie' bzw. 'Pseudonymität' vgl. die grundlegenden Artikel, die von den Autoren P. POKORNÝ, "Pseudonymität. I. Altes und Neues Testament", *TRE* 27 (1997) 645–655; G. STEMBERGER, "Pseudonymität. II. Judentum", *TRE* 27 (1997) 656–659; P. GERLITZ "Pseudonymität. I. Religionsgeschichtlich" *TRE* 27 (1997) 659–662, und M. WOLTER "Pseudonymität. II. Kirchengeschichtlich", *TRE* 27 (1997) 662–670, angefertigt wurden. Für Weish sei besonders auf die Seiten 646 (Zeilen 42–52), 649 (Zeilen 19–23) und 651 (Zeilen 25–29) verwiesen.

⁽³⁾ Zur Rezeption des Weisheitsbuches in der frühen Kirche vgl. C. LARCHER, *Études sur le livre de la Sagesse* (EtB; Paris 1969) 36–63; zu einigen Stellenangaben bei Clemens von Alexandrien vgl. S. 39.

⁽⁴⁾ Origenes, *In Joh.* 20.4.26 (Joh 8,37) nimmt Weish als auktoriales Werk wahr und bezweifelt die Autorschaft Salomos. Hieronymus spricht nicht von der 'Weisheit Salomos', sondern vom 'Buch der Weisheit' und zählt dieses zu den Apokryphen, die er am Rande des jüdischen Kanons mit 22 Schriften ansiedelt; zu beiden Autoren siehe LARCHER, *Études sur le livre de la Sagesse*, 43–46, 57–59. Zu Hieronymus vgl. J.I. POCK, *Sapientia Salomonis*. Hieronymus' Exegese des Weisheitsbuches im Licht der Tradition (DUG 89; Graz 1992) 341–360.

anzunehmen. Dass Heiden zumindest auch zu den primären Adressaten zu zählen seien, könnte man aus der teilweise universellen Tendenz der Schrift schließen. So sieht Offerhaus in den Passagen, die besonders stark von den Gegensätzen zwischen Gerechten und Gottlosen geprägt sind (1–5; 11–19), die Polarität zwischen den beiden Gruppen transzendiert. Der Autor richte sich an alle Menschen, besonders auch dort, wo er werbend auf seine Leser eingeht (1,13–14; 2,23–24 und 11,[15–16]17–12,22)⁽⁵⁾. Die Intention von Weish wäre demzufolge, das heidnische Publikum unter Verwendung griechischer Begrifflichkeit und Bildung für die jüdische Religion zu gewinnen. Dem widersprechen U. Offerhaus und A. Schmitt aus zwei Gründen.

Schmitt geht hypothetisch von einem nichtjüdischen Leserkreis aus, der keine detaillierten Bibelkenntnisse besitzt. Dieser Annahme setzt er entgegen, dass einem solchen Kreis die Antonomasien, die Ersetzungen konkreter Völker- und Personennamen wie in 4,10; 7,1.10; 11,1.14; 14,6; 15,14; 18,5.21; 19,14.17, unverständlich blieben. Nur ein bibelkundiges Publikum könne das Buch Weish sachgerecht verstehen⁽⁶⁾.

Dieses Argument ist meines Erachtens jedoch nicht in jeder Hinsicht schlüssig. Zunächst fällt es schwer, die Bibelkenntnisse der Juden in der Diaspora wie z. B. in Alexandria genau nachzuweisen. Die hebr. Bibel wurde durch die LXX-Übersetzung, die gemäß dem Aristeasbrief auch in der Museonsbibliothek deponiert wurde⁽⁷⁾, der griechischen Öffentlichkeit zugänglich. Verraten die ersten griechischen bzw. römischen Schriftsteller ein noch recht vages, manchmal sogar irrigtes Wissen um die Inhalte der jüdischen heiligen Schriften, so gibt z. B. Alexander Polyhistor im 1. Jh. v. Chr. an, dass er um heilige Bücher der Juden wisse. Er selbst verwendet für sein Werk 'Über die Juden' zahlreiche jüdische Schriftsteller, unter ihnen Demetrius, Eupolemus, Artapanus, Malchus-Cleodemus, Aristes, der Epiker Philon und der Tragiker Ezekiel⁽⁸⁾. Dies zeigt, dass heidnische Autoren sich

⁽⁵⁾ Vgl. U. OFFERHAUS, *Komposition und Intention der Sapientia Salomonis* (Bonn 1981) 231, 237.

⁽⁶⁾ Vgl. A. SCHMITT, *Das Buch der Weisheit. Ein Kommentar* (Würzburg 1986) 20; OFFERHAUS, *Sapientia Salomonis*, 248.

⁽⁷⁾ Zum Aristeastext in dt. Übersetzung vgl. N. MEISNER, *Aristeasbrief* (JSHRZ II/1; Gütersloh 1973); zum griechischen Text und der Rezeption des Briefes in Josephus vgl. A. PELLETIER, *Lettre d'Aristée a Philocrate*. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes, index complet des mots grecs (SC 89, Paris 1962).

⁽⁸⁾ Vgl. M. STERN, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem 1974) I, 157.

mit jüdischen Schriften und Schriftstellern beschäftigten⁽⁹⁾. Wieviele heidnische Schriftsteller an jüdischer Kultur, Geschichte und Religion interessiert waren, ist schwer abzuschätzen. Die umfangreiche, wenn auch größtenteils verloren gegangene jüdische Literatur in griechischer Sprach- und Darstellungsmaske verrät ein reges Interesse. Will man im Fall von Weisheit nicht unbedingt von Missionsliteratur sprechen, so muß zunächst beachtet werden, dass Mission nicht bei den schärfsten Gegnern, sondern bei den Sympathisanten beginnt. Somit kann dieses erste Argument kaum dazu helfen, den Adressatenkreis von Weish einzuschränken.

Ein zweites Argument gegen heidnische Adressaten geht davon aus, dass Weish in Ägypten geschrieben und dort zunächst rezipiert wurde. Sollte Weish an heidnische Ägypter gerichtet sein, so würde jeglicher 'Missionsversuch' daran scheitern, dass sich die Ägypter ohne eingehende Bibelkenntnisse zwangsläufig mit den Gottlosen und Feinden identifizieren würden, da der Autor deren Religionsausübung als Götzendienst abtut und sich über deren Tierverehrung sogar lustig macht (vgl. Weish 13–15). Von einer werbenden Einstellung, die von einheimischen Traditionen behutsam zur jüdischen Religion hinüberführt, ist da nicht mehr die Rede. Ein Missionserfolg bei den Ägyptern sei mit diesen Mitteln jedenfalls nicht zu erzielen⁽¹⁰⁾.

Auch dieses Argument überzeugt nicht. Zunächst muß unterstrichen werden, dass sich die Ablehnung des ägyptischen Tierkults nicht nur in jüdischen Schriften findet⁽¹¹⁾. Es muß auch beachtet werden, dass die Einteilung der Bevölkerung einer antiken Stadt wie Alexandria in Juden, Griechen und einheimische Ägypter manchmal die Vielfalt der kulturellen Beziehungen verdeckt, die zwischen diesen Gruppen bestanden. Anteil an griechischer Kultur hatten alle Bevölkerungsschichten, insofern sie an der Verwaltung und Leitung des Gemeinwesens beteiligt waren. Von daher verwundert es nicht, dass sich

⁽⁹⁾ Vgl. dazu auch SPEYER, *Die literarische Fälschung*, 158–160.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Vgl. OFFERHAUS, *Sapientia Salomonis*, 238; SCHMITT, *Das Buch der Weisheit*, 20.

⁽¹¹⁾ Zu den Belegstellen vgl. M. GILBERT, *La critique des dieux dans le Livre de la Sagesse* (Sg 13–15) (AnBib 53; Roma 1973) 238–242; siehe auch SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, III, 148, 149, 174.

⁽¹²⁾ Zum literarischen Genus von Weish vgl. M. GILBERT, "Sagesse de Salomon (ou Livre de la Sagesse)", *DBS* XI (1986) 77–85. M. Gilbert neigt mit P. Beauchamp dazu, Weisheit als Enkomion (éloge) zu beurteilen; siehe auch M. GILBERT, "La Sagesse de Salomon", *Les Psaumes et les autres Écrits* (Hrsg. J. AUNEAU) (PBSB.AT 5; Paris 1990) 331–334.

jüdische Schriftsteller in vieler Hinsicht der griechischen Philosophie bedienten, sofern diese inhaltlich ihren Traditionen entsprach. Schließlich muß noch betont werden, dass Vorstellungen von Umdenken, Umkehr, Neuorientierung des Denkens im hellenistischen philosophischen Milieu von großer Bedeutung waren. Die hellenistischen Philosophenschulen auf ihrem Weg zu 'Lebensschulen' warben mit schriftlichen Mitteln in eigener Sache. Eines der literarischen Genera für Werbeschriften war das Enkomion⁽¹²⁾. Darin wurden die Leser u. a. zur Abkehr von alten Vorstellungen aufgerufen. Die neue Erkenntnis galt es als künftige Lebensbasis anzunehmen. Zunächst richteten sich diese Schriften wohl v. a. an interessierte Sympathisanten und Anhänger⁽¹³⁾.

Zu guter Letzt darf auch noch bezweifelt werden, dass Alexandria tatsächlich der Abfassungsort der Weish war⁽¹⁴⁾. Jüdische Diasporagemeinden gab es im 1. Jh. vor und nach Chr. in vielen Städten des Mittelmeerraumes und seiner angrenzenden Länder. Die griechische Literatur und Bildung wurde nicht nur in Alexandria gepflegt, wiewohl Alexandria ohne Zweifel ein mediterranes Zentrum des Hellenismus war. Der Grund, dass meist Alexandria als Abfassungsort von Weish vermutet wird, liegt darin, dass der Großteil der jüdischen Literatur, die für den Vergleich mit Weish herangezogen wird, mit dieser Stadt verbunden ist⁽¹⁵⁾. Dies wird wohl auch tatsächlich der kulturellen Bedeutung des alexandrinischen Judentums für die damalige Welt entsprechen. Daraus lassen sich noch keine sicheren Schlüsse für den Abfassungsort von Weish ziehen. Notgedrungen wird der Forscher aber immer wieder auf diese Stadt und deren antike Verhältnisse zurückgreifen, wenn es darum geht, die jüdisch-hellenistischen Lebensumstände zu studieren.

Diese Beobachtungen führen zum Schluß, dass Heiden als Adressaten von Weish nicht prinzipiell ausgeschlossen werden können⁽¹⁶⁾. Wer jedoch tatsächlich von den Heiden dieses Buch

⁽¹³⁾ Vgl. z. B. das protreptische Lehrschreiben Epikurs an Menoikeus. Vom Adressaten ist vorausgesetzt, dass er sich aktiv die neue Lehre aneignet. Der Wille dazu wird vorausgesetzt.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Alexandria wird heute fast einhellig als Abfassungsort von Weish angegeben. Einer der wenigen, der diese Annahme zumindest in Frage stellt, ist D. GEORGI, *Weisheit Salomos* (JSHRZ III/4; Gütersloh 1980) 395-396.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Zur alexandrinischen Literatur vgl. P.M. FRASER, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford 1972) I-II.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Auch OFFERHAUS, *Sapientia Salomonis*, 239, unterstreicht, dass der Verfasser intentional alle Menschen als Adressaten im Blick hat, auch wenn

gelesen hat, kann nicht mehr erschlossen werden. Ob ausschließlich Heiden als Adressaten von Weish in Frage kommen, bleibt noch zu untersuchen.

II. Juden als Adressaten von Weish?

Offerhaus sieht in Weish 1–5 und 11–19 unzweideutige Hinweise, dass der Verfasser seine Schrift faktisch nur an Juden gerichtet habe⁽¹⁷⁾.

Als erstes Argument für die jüdische Adressatenschaft wird die Bezeichnung 'Väter' in 12,21; 18,9.22.24 angeführt. Doch diese Annahme geht davon aus, dass diese Väter zugleich Väter der Adressaten seien. Das kann, muß aber nicht gelten. In Kapitel 12 und 18 ist die Exodusgeneration als Referenzpunkt der Textwelt anzusehen. Die Väter bezeichnen deren Vorfahren im allgemeinen (18,9 'Loblieder der Väter'), die väterlichen Bundespartner (12,21; 18,22 vgl. Abraham in Gen 15; 17; Isaak in Gen 26,3-5; Jakob in Gen 35,11-12) oder die Söhne Jakobs ('die Namen der Väter auf dem hohenpriesterlichen Gewand Aarons' Ex 28,21). Dass diese 'Väter' zugleich die Väter der Adressaten sein müßten, ist nicht gesagt. In den obigen Textstellen kommt lediglich eine Beziehung zwischen der Exodusgeneration und deren Vorfahren zum Ausdruck.

Das zweite Argument zugunsten jüdischer Adressatenschaft betrifft die Verwendung der 1. Person *Plural* als Personal- oder Possessivpronomen. Ersteres tritt in 12,18.22; 15,1-4 und 18,8 auf, letzteres in 12,6; 16,8; 18,6. Zweimal ist die Rede von 'unseren Vätern', in 12,6 und 18,6. Im ersten Fall sind die Väter gemeint, die die Kanaanäer vernichtet haben, im zweiten die Exodusgeneration. Daraus ist jedoch noch nicht auf die Adressaten zu schließen, sondern höchstens auf den Autor. Dieser wird als einer gekennzeichnet, der in der Tradition seiner Väter bzw. Vorfahren steht und sich als solcher an sein Publikum wendet. Es ist vorstellbar, dass ein jüdischer Autor über seine Väter erzählt und sich damit auch an ein heidnisches Publikum wendet. Wenn sich der Autor in besonderer Weise mit seinen Vätern der Exodusgeneration identifiziert (12,18.22; 16,8; 18,8), so muß das nicht unmittelbar für die Adressaten gelten. Es kommt darin vielmehr

er sogleich einschränkt: "Doch ist damit noch nicht gesagt, daß er sich mit ihr [Weish] auch faktisch in erster Linie an Heiden wendet".

⁽¹⁷⁾ Vgl. OFFERHAUS, *Sapientia Salomonis*, 239-249; SCHMITT, *Das Buch der Weisheit*, 20-21.

die lebendige Bedeutung des Exodus für den Autor zum Ausdruck, und diese Botschaft möchte er seinem Publikum, gleich ob jüdisch oder heidnisch, vermitteln. Ohne Zweifel will die Verwendung der ersten Person *Plural* die Adressaten von der Sicht des Verfassers überzeugen (vgl. v. a. 15,1-4). Die Perspektive des Autors und seiner väterlichen Tradition kann aber sowohl auf Juden wie auf Heiden seine Faszination ausüben. Zuletzt bleibt immer noch die Frage, wer sich von den Juden oder Heiden zur Erkenntnis, die dem Autor geschenkt worden ist, bekehrt. Umdenken, Umkehr steht jüdischen Apostaten⁽¹⁸⁾ genauso offen wie heidnischen Götzendienern.

In diese Richtung deutet auch die Beobachtung von Offerhaus, dass 'Volk Gottes' in Weish nicht ein ethnisch-nationaler, sondern 'nur noch' ein religiöser Begriff sei⁽¹⁹⁾. Wenn er als Bedingungen für das religiöse Israel den Besitz der Weisheit und ein Leben gemäß dem Willen Gottes nennt, so läßt sich daraus kaum etwas über die Adressaten von Weish aussagen. Intentional sind alle Menschen angesprochen, faktisch wird es sich wohl um eine interessierte Zuhörerschaft sowohl jüdischer als auch heidnischer Provenienz gehandelt haben.

Dass mit der Polemik von 2,1-10 bzw. 13-15 jüdische Skeptiker und Apostaten angesprochen seien, kann möglich sein⁽²⁰⁾. Ohne Zweifel kann man dahinter auch ein Zerrbild der Epikuräer erkennen⁽²¹⁾. Polemik und Verzerrung des 'Gegners' ist die andere Seite einer Werbekampagne. Über die Verwerflichkeit dieser Praktiken, wie sie in 2,1-10 oder 13-15 beschrieben werden, waren sich jedoch nicht nur zahlreiche Juden einig, sondern ebenso Heiden, unter ihnen sogar Epikuräer, die sich gegen ein Negativimage zu wehren hatten.

Ob in Weish 13-15 die 'aktuelle' Situation der jüdischen Gemeinde, die im hellenistischen Ägypten mit dem Abfall vom

⁽¹⁸⁾ In den literarischen Quellen werden lediglich zwei alexandrinische Apostaten namentlich genannt. Es handelt sich dabei um Dositheos (3 Makk 1,3) und Tiberius Julius Alexander, dem Vetter Philos von Alexandrien (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.100; Anspielung in Philo, *Vita Mosis* 1.31).

⁽¹⁹⁾ Vgl. OFFERHAUS, *Sapientia Salomonis*, 241.

⁽²⁰⁾ OFFERHAUS, *Sapientia Salomonis*, 243.

⁽²¹⁾ Zur Beurteilung der Gegner in Weish 2 vgl. SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, I, 136-143. Von besonderem Interesse ist die Angleichung jüdischer Parteien an hellenistische Philosophenschulen bei Flavius Josephus. Dieser stellte die Pharisäer an die Seite der Stoiker, die Essener an die Seite der Pythagoräer, die Sadduzäer an die Seite der Epikuräer. In seiner Darstellung herrscht aber eine oberflächliche Wahrnehmung der hellenistischen Philosophenschulen vor (S. 141).

jüdischen Glauben zu kämpfen hatte, angesprochen ist⁽²²⁾, läßt sich wohl kaum nachweisen. Die Vorstellung, dass in der Diaspora eine Entfremdung von eigenen, u. a. religiösen Traditionen unter Assimilation an heidnische Traditionen stattgefunden habe, geht davon aus, dass es einmal ein eigentliches 'Judentum' gegeben habe. Mit dieser Annahme befinden wir uns jedoch schon im Vorstellungskreis von Wünschen, Ideen, Werbungszielen. Mit anderen Worten, die Kapitel 13–15 lassen kaum Rückschlüsse auf signifikante historische Entwicklungen im antiken Alexandrien zu.

Zudem ist zu überlegen, ob jüdische Apostaten bereit waren, sich die 19 Kapitel des Weisheitsbuches anzuhören, wenn sie doch auf Distanz gegenüber ihren Traditionen gehen wollten. Dennoch stimmen die sogenannten Apostaten und der Autor von Weish in einem überein. Beiden wenden enorme Kraft auf, um mit der 'neuen' Welt des Hellenismus, der griechischsprechenden Zivilisation, in Kommunikation zu treten. Als 'Adressaten' sind von daher in beiden Fällen die neuen hellenistischen Kulturträger im Blick. Die Schrift Weish wendet sich nach außen, d.h. heidnischen Adressaten zu. Sie ist aber auch nach innen, an die jüdischen Adressaten gerichtet, insofern sie zu einer intensiven Auseinandersetzung mit der hellenistischen Kultur anregt.

Ob Weish im Hinblick auf die Kommunikation zwischen jüdischer und hellenistischer Welt vorrangig einen politischen Zweck zugunsten der Interessen einer bestimmten Gruppierung verfolgt und damit als gefälschte religiöse Schrift eingeschätzt werden müßte, soll im folgenden untersucht werden.

III. Weish als politische Schrift?

Bei politischen Schriften geht es unter anderem darum, die Zielvorstellung des in der jeweiligen Situation geforderten politischen Handelns den Adressaten plausibel zu machen, bzw. sich vor den Angriffen der Gegner zu verteidigen. Dabei ist ein konkreter politischer Hintergrund Ausgangspunkt für die Abfassung einer politischen Schrift. Für das Buch der Weish hat die Forschung versucht, verschiedene historische Szenarien als Motiv der Abfassung zu erschließen. Die Bandbreite der Vorschläge ist groß: Schmitt sieht in den Auseinandersetzungen der ptolemäischen Thronnachfolge des ausgehenden 2. Jh. v. Chr. und deren Konse-

⁽²²⁾ So OFFERHAUS, *Sapientia Salomonis*, 246.

quenzen für die jüdische Gemeinde in Alexandria den historischen Hintergrund für Weish gegeben⁽²³⁾. Ruppert meint zumindest für den Textabschnitt Weish 2,12*-20 und 5,1-7 eine historische Situation ausfindig zu machen. Es handle sich beim Gerechten um den hasidäischen Toralehrer und Priester Jose ben Joeser aus Zereda (1 Makk 7,13-18; 161 v. Chr.). Unter Alexander Jannaios (88-86 v. Chr.), der 800 gefangene Pharisäer kreuzigen ließ, habe dieser Text eine zweite historische Verortung erfahren⁽²⁴⁾. Offerhaus sieht mit Weish 19,13-17 eine stärker werdende Fremdenfeindlichkeit gegeben und datiert diese Entwicklung in die Zeit vor der ersten blutigen Judenverfolgung in Alexandria (101 v. Chr.; 88 v. Chr.)⁽²⁵⁾. Larcher erachtet die Zeit von 30-10 v. Chr. als historischen Hintergrund für die Abfassung von Weish⁽²⁶⁾. Winston und Scarpato sehen u. a. in der alexandrinischen Judenverfolgung unter Caligula den Anlaß für die Verfassung des Buches Weish⁽²⁷⁾.

Schon die Unterschiedlichkeit der Einschätzung des historischen Hintergrunds muß davor warnen, in Weish eine politische Schrift zu sehen, die auf konkrete historische Ereignisse reagiert. Die Forschung zeigt vielmehr, dass der aktuelle Anlaß der Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Gerechten und Frevlern nicht mehr eruierbar ist. Jegliche Identifizierung mit historisch verifizierbaren Gruppierungen oder Parteien scheint unmöglich zu sein⁽²⁸⁾. Gerade dies wäre für eine Auseinandersetzung im alltäglichen politischen Streit von Bedeutung. Philo von Alexandrien, der zumindest einmal in der Gesandtschaft an Caligula als Politiker auftritt, hat dieses Ereignis in seiner *Legatio ad*

⁽²³⁾ SCHMITT, *Das Buch der Weisheit*, 8.

⁽²⁴⁾ L. RUPPERT, *Der leidende Gerechte*. Eine motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Alten Testament und zwischentestamentlichen Judentum (FzB 5, Würzburg 1972) 87-96, 103-105.

⁽²⁵⁾ Vgl. OFFERHAUS, *Sapientia Salomonis*, 260-270. Für D. WINSTON, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (AncB 43; Garden City 1979) 25, weist der Abschnitt Weish 19,13-17 hingegen auf die Zeit der Judenverfolgung unter Caligula hin.

⁽²⁶⁾ C. LARCHER, *Le livre de la Sagesse ou la Sagesse de Salomon* (EtB 1; Paris 1983) I, 153-161; für augustäische Zeit plädiert GILBERT, "Sagesse de Salomon (ou Livre de la Sagesse)", 93.

⁽²⁷⁾ Vgl. WINSTON, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 21-25. SCARPATO, *Libro della Sapienza*, I, 16-24.

⁽²⁸⁾ Vgl. M. GILBERT, "Il giusto perseguitato di Sap 2,12-20: figura messianica", *L'Antico Testamento interpretato dal Nuovo*. Il Messia (ed. G. DE GENNARO) (Studio Biblico Teologico Aquilano; Napoli 1985) 193-218; v. a. 200-210.

Gaium⁽²⁹⁾ reflektiert. Dabei ist schon bei Philo eine gewisse Distanz zu den alltäglichen Auseinandersetzungen in Alexandria zu erkennen. Dennoch sind die 'Gegner' und die historischen Ereignisse deutlich erkennbar. Das Buch *Weish* nennt demgegenüber höchstens Feinde des jüdischen Volkes, nämlich Ägypter und Kanaanäer (Sodomiter), aus entfernter Vorzeit. Diese sind kaum mit 'aktuellen' Gruppen zu identifizieren. Die Schrift *Weish* kann demzufolge nicht als geradlinige, literarische Fortsetzung einer politischen Flugschrift im Parteienkampf gesehen werden. Sie will auch nicht als mitunter apologetische, historische Reflexion konkreter politischer Situationen verstanden werden, wie dies z. B. bei Philo in seinen Werken *Legatio ad Gaium* bzw. *In Flaccum* der Fall ist.

Weish ist demgegenüber als religiöse, heilige Schrift zu kennzeichnen, die zumindest nicht vorrangig als "jüdische Propaganda unter heidnischer Maske"⁽³⁰⁾ bewertet werden kann. Als solche will sie den Adressaten der unverfügbaren göttlichen Weisheit näher bringen, ungeachtet wie weit dieser noch von ihr entfernt ist. Voraussetzung dafür bleibt die Bereitschaft des Adressaten, das Geschenk der Weisheit Gottes bereitwillig anzunehmen.

IV. Könige und Herrscher als Adressaten von *Weish*

Das Buch der *Weish* verrät an einigen Stellen explizit, an wen sich der Sprecher bzw. Autor wendet. In Proömium (1,1-15) werden 'Richter/Herrscher der Erde' οἱ κρίνοντες τὴν γῆν (1,1) angesprochen, in 6,1 'Könige' βασιλεῖς und 'Richter/Gebieten der ganzen Welt' δικαστὰι περὰ τῶν γῆς, in 6,2 'Herrscher der Massen und Stolze auf die Scharen der Völker' οἱ κρατοῦντες πλήθους καὶ γεγαυρωμένοι ἐπὶ ὄχλοις ἐθνῶν, in 6,9 'Beherrscher' ὁ τύραννος.

Selbst der Sprecher der Rede in der 1. Person Singular 7,1-21 zählt sich zu den Königen (7,5 'keiner der Könige nämlich' οὐδεὶς γὰρ βασιλέων; 7,8 'ich zog sie Zeptern und Thronen vor' προέκρινα αὐτὴν σκῆπτρων καὶ θρόνων; 9,7 'König deines Volkes' βασιλέα λαοῦ σου). In Begleitung der göttlichen Weisheit weiß sich der Autor in hohem Ansehen bei seinem Volk (8,10 'Ansehen bei den Scharen und Ehre

⁽²⁹⁾ Zu Philo von Alexandrien siehe die griechische Textausgabe *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt* (eds. L. COHN – P. WENDLAND) (Berlin 1896-1915) I-VI; zur deutschen Übersetzung siehe *Philo von Alexandrien. Die Werke in deutscher Übersetzung* (eds. L. COHN et al.) (Berlin 1962-1964) I-VII.

⁽³⁰⁾ Zu diesem Ausdruck vgl. SPEYER, *Die literarische Fälschung*, 160.

bei den Älteren' δόξαν ἐν ὄχλοις καὶ τιμὴν παρὰ πρεσβυτέροις). Er wähnt sich exakt im Gericht (8,11 ὁξὺς ἐν κρίσει; vgl. 9,7 'Richter/Herrscher deiner Söhne und Töchter' δικαστὴν υἱῶν σου καὶ θυγατέρων), bestaunt von den Herrschern (8,11 'in der Sicht der Herrscher werde ich bestaunt werden' ἐν ὧν δυναστῶν θαυμασθήσομαι vgl. 5,23), als Leiter von Völkern (8,14 'ich werde die Landsleute versorgen und die Völker werden mir untertan sein' διοικήσω λαοὺς καὶ ἔθνη ὑποταγήσεταιί μοι) und den schauderhaften Beherrschern überlegen (8,15 τύραννοι φρικτοί). Schließlich gibt sich der Sprecher als Erbauer des Tempels Gottes, des Abbilds des heiligen Zeltes von Anfang an, zu erkennen (9,8)⁽³¹⁾. Der Kontext LXX läßt wohl nur an König Salomo denken, nicht hingegen an den Erbauer des Tempels in Leontopolis oder den 'nachexilischen' Wiedererbauer des Jersualemer Heiligtums, Nehemia.

Ein Vergleich zwischen dem Selbstverständnis des Sprechers und der Adressaten zeigt, dass beide der Gruppe der Herrscher mit Vollmachten über Menschen und Völker zuzurechnen sind. Sowohl der Autor als auch dessen Adressaten gelten als Könige (βασιλεύς, 7,5; 9,7 vgl. 6,1), Herrscher/Richter (δικαστής 9,7 vgl. 6,2; κρίσις, οἱ κρίνοντες 8,11 vgl. 1,1). Das Nomen τύραννος (6,9; 8,15) wendet der Sprecher nicht explizit auf seine eigene Person an. Diese Ähnlichkeit des sozialen Milieus des Sprechers und seiner Adressaten kennzeichnet die Weish als Rede eines Königs oder Herrschers an seinesgleichen. Will man Weish als Diasporaschrift verstehen, so werden die verschiedenen ethnischen Verantwortlichen einer Diasporagemeinde angesprochen. Zunächst wendet sich der König, der den Tempel erbaut hat, an seine Nachfolger in der Verantwortung für sein Volk, sodann natürlich auch an alle anderen Verantwortlichen der Ethnien, die in der Diasporagemeinde mit den jüdischen Menschen zusammenwohnen. Im antiken Alexandria z. B. wären diesbezüglich in erster Linie die griechischsprechenden Herrscher angesprochen. Diese weiten den Blickkreis auf das von Alexander eroberte Reich bzw. ab 30 v. Chr. auf den von Rom unterworfenen 'Erdbkreis'⁽³²⁾.

⁽³¹⁾ Siehe dazu SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, II, 222-225.

⁽³²⁾ SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, I, 352, sieht in der Phrase οἱ κρατοῦντες πλήθους καὶ γεγυρωμένοι ἐπὶ ὄχλοις ἐθνῶν ('die Herrscher der Massen und Stölze auf die Scharen der Völker') (6,2) einen Hinweis auf die Römer. Zudem beeinflusst das Vorkommen des Nomens κράτησις (6,3), das für Ägypten eine neue politische Ära mit neuer Datierungsform (im Jahr x der Kratesis des Kaisers [Augustus]) kennzeichnet, seine Datierung von Weish in die römische Zeit (vgl. *ibid.*, I, 16-24).

Ein Szenario, in dem sich ein jüdischer Herrscher an verantwortliche griechische oder römische Herrscher wendet, ist durchaus vorstellbar. Die Makkabäerbücher wissen von Gesandtschaften 'makkabäischer' Herrscher an Seleukiden (vgl. z. B. 1 Makk 10,3.17-20.25-45) oder nach Sparta (12,5-23) bzw. Rom (1 Makk 8,17-32; 12,1-4; 15,15-24). Auch Philo von Alexandria nahm an einer Gesandtschaft der jüdischen Gemeinde in Alexandria nach Rom teil. Im Anschluß an die Ausschreitungen und Verfolgungen des jüdischen Bevölkerungsanteils in Alexandria 39/40 n. Chr. sucht das jüdische Politeuma direkt beim römischen Kaiser Schutz. In der Schrift *Legatio ad Gaium* reflektiert Philo von Alexandria noch einmal über dieses historische Unternehmen, dem im großen und ganzen kaum Erfolg beschieden war. Die Problemlösung mußte — abgesehen von einigen Versetzungen hoher römischer Beamter — an Ort und Stelle erfolgen. Und wohl alle Bewohner von Alexandria hatten daran Interesse, dass eine schnelle Beilegung des Konflikts zustande kam. Von daher sind weder die Bücher 1-2 Makk noch die *Legatio ad Gaium* direkt an den fremden König gerichtet. Dennoch fungiert der Kommunikationsvorgang einer Gesandtschaft, von König zu König, zumindest teilweise als Hintergrund der Darstellung dieser Werke. Dies gilt ausdrücklich für das Buch der Weish. Dort steht jedoch nicht ein politischer Konflikt im Vordergrund, sondern eine philosophisch geprägte Botschaft. Dass diese auch in den unmittelbaren Wirkkreis der Könige gestellt wird, dürfte damit zusammenhängen, dass Könige und Herrscher auch als Förderer der Kultur galten. Die auf Initiative des Ptolemaios I. hin gegründete Museionsbibliothek in Alexandria ist dafür ein Beispiel. Im Umkreis des Königspalastes wurden kulturelle Traditionen gepflegt. Dass der ideale König zugleich ein Philosoph sein soll, ist ein Ideal, das schon Plato in seinem Werk hervorgehoben hat⁽³³⁾. So verwundert es nicht, dass König Agrippa in der *Legatio ad Gaium* in einem Brief dem Kaiser Caligula v. a. dessen Urgroßvater Augustus als Ideal vor Augen hält⁽³⁴⁾. Augustus hätte nämlich keine oberflächliche Berührung mit der

⁽³³⁾ Vgl. R. BARRACLOUGH, "Philo's Politics. Roman Rule and Hellenistic Judaism", *ANRW* 21.1 (1984) 488.

⁽³⁴⁾ Siehe Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium*, 309-310. Zu politischen Vorstellungen Philos insgesamt siehe BARRACLOUGH, "Philo's Politics. Roman Rule and Hellenistic Judaism", 417-553; zur Schrift *Legatio ad Gaium* vgl. C.K. REGGIANI, "I rapporti tra l'impero romano e il mondo ebraico al tempo di Caligola secondo la 'Legatio ad Gaium' di Filone Alessandrino", *ANRW* 21.1 (1984) 554-586, und E.M. SMALLWOOD, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium*. Edited with an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary (Leiden 1970).

Philosophie erfahren. Vielmehr waren ständig Gelehrte um ihn, die ihn in philosophischen Belangen beraten hätten. Von daher läßt es sich auch verstehen, dass er voll Bewunderung war, als er hörte, dass es im Jerusalemer Heiligtum keine sichtbare Darstellung des unsichtbaren Wesens gebe. Dass Augustus in diesem Abschnitt nicht exklusiv aus jüdischer Perspektive dargestellt sein muß, ergibt sich daraus, dass auch nicht-jüdische hellenistische Gelehrte das Göttliche ohne sichtbare Darstellung konzipieren konnten. Der griechische Philosoph Zenon, der eigentliche Begründer der Stoa, sieht in der Unabbildbarkeit des Göttlichen einen Pol philosophischen Nachdenkens⁽³⁵⁾. Der römische Gelehrte Varro bestätigt im 1. Jh. v. Chr. die jüdische Besonderheit der bilderlosen Verehrung des Göttlichen als akzeptable Auffassung und sieht darin eine Gemeinsamkeit mit den frühen römischen Traditionen⁽³⁶⁾.

Der Ort der Annäherung an das griechisch-römisch gebildete Publikum ist für Philo die königliche Bibliothek bzw. der Königshof selbst. Während der Mahlzeiten am Hof habe der König ausführliche philosophische Gespräche mit den Gebildeten geführt, wie Philo zu wissen vorgibt⁽³⁷⁾. Die königlichen Mahlzeiten als Gelegenheit für philosophische Auseinandersetzungen spielen auch in der Erzählung des Aristeasbriefes eine bedeutende Rolle. Demzufolge habe der ptolemäische König jüdische Gelehrte, die vom Jerusalemer Hohenpriester zur Übersetzung des Gesetzes nach Alexandria geschickt wurden, zum Mahl eingeladen. Er stellte den 70 Gelehrten der Reihe nach Fragen, die u. a. die ideale Herrschaftsweise des Königs betreffen. Am Ende dieser Befragung weiß der Leser des Aristeasbriefes, wie der Autor sich den idealen König vorstellt. Es ist ein König, der die prompten und weisen Antworten der jüdischen Gesandten mit Bewunderung aufnimmt. Ohne Zweifel bringen diese Ausführungen die Wünsche und Idealvorstellungen des Autors zum Ausdruck. Es ist sehr fraglich, ob die ausführlichen Tischgespräche der 70 jüdischen Gelehrten jemals stattgefunden haben. Dennoch muß das historische Szenario ernst genommen werden: Gesandte, kulturell gebildete Menschen der verschiedenen Völker eines Reiches kamen am Königshof zusammen. Der Kulturaustausch am Königshof war die logische Folge dieser politischen Situation. In dieses Szenario fügt

⁽³⁵⁾ Vgl. STERN, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, 207.

⁽³⁶⁾ Vgl. STERN, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, 207 (Text zitiert bei Augustinus, *De civ. Dei*, 4.31).

⁽³⁷⁾ Siehe Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium*, 310.

sich auch das Buch der Weish, das davon spricht, dass sich ein weiser israelitischer König persönlich an andere Könige und damit an andere Kulturzentren wendet. Dieser historischen Einkleidung muß auch auf der Ebene des eigentlichen Autors und der eigentlichen Rezipienten eine Realität entsprechen. Ein Vergleich mit Philo von Alexandria und Flavius Josephus bezüglich ihrer Leserschaft kann bei der Eruiierung der Zuhörerschaft von Weish weiterhelfen.

V. Philo von Alexandria, Flavius Josephus und deren Primärrezipienten

Aus den zahlreichen Schriften Philos erfährt man eigentlich nicht, für wen dieser direkt geschrieben hat. Zu seiner Person weiß man aus den Schriften des Josephus⁽³⁸⁾, dass Philo zu den einflußreichen, führenden Juden in dieser Stadt gehörte (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.259)⁽³⁹⁾. Sein überaus reicher Bruder Alexander Lysimachus wurde von Gaius (Caligula) eingesperrt und von Claudius später wieder freigelassen (*Ant.* 19.276). Er war der Vater des Tiberius Julius Alexander, der als jüdischer Apostat gilt (*BJ* 5.205; *Ant.* 20.100). Philo und seine Familie gehörten demnach der Führungsschicht Alexandrias an. Als Repräsentanten von ca. einem Drittel der Bevölkerung Alexandrias⁽⁴⁰⁾ waren sie wohl in ständigem Kontakt und Austausch mit hellenistischen Herrschern. Von Philo weiß man, dass er an Theaterveranstaltungen, Boxkämpfen und Wagenrennen teilgenommen hat⁽⁴¹⁾. Der ständige Kontakt mit anderen Kulturen schlägt sich wie selbstverständlich in seinen Schriften nieder, die ein hohes Maß an Vertrautheit mit den griechischen Traditionen zeigen. Dennoch sind

⁽³⁸⁾ Griechische Textausgabe *Flavii Josephi opera* (ed. B. NIESE) (Berlin 1885-1895) I-VII; deutsche Übersetzungen: *Des Flavius Josephus Jüdische Altertümer* (Übersetzt und mit Einleitung und Anmerkungen versehen von H. CLEMENTZ) (Wiesbaden 1994). *Flavius Josephus kleinere Schriften. Selbstbiographie. Gegen Apion. Über die Makkabäer* (Übersetzt und mit Einleitung und Anmerkungen versehen von H. CLEMENTZ) (Wiesbaden 1993).

⁽³⁹⁾ Siehe BARRACLOUGH, "Philo's Politics. Roman Rule and Hellenistic Judaism", 440-441.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Zur Einschätzung der Bevölkerungszusammensetzung des antiken Alexandrias vgl. BARRACLOUGH, "Philo's Politics. Roman Rule and Hellenistic Judaism", 422, n. 21; und D. DELIA, "The Population of Roman Alexandria", *TAPA* 118 (1988) 286-288.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Vgl. BARRACLOUGH, "Philo's Politics. Roman Rule and Hellenistic Judaism", 441.

seine Schriften inhaltlich v. a. an der Mosetora ausgerichtet. Es stellt sich die Frage, für wen Philo denn eigentlich geschrieben hat.

Um diese Frage zu beantworten, muß die allgemeine soziale und politische Situation des antiken Alexandrias berücksichtigt werden. An der Verwaltung, die Anteil am Reichtum versprach, konnte nur der teilnehmen, der Griechisch sprechen und schreiben konnte. Wer von der einheimischen und jüdischen Bevölkerung diese Sprachbarriere nicht überbrückte, konnte nicht aufsteigen⁽⁴²⁾. Infolge des Ausbaus Alexandrias zu einer mediterranen Kulturmetropole bemühten sich auch die Juden, möglichst rasch in die hellenistische (Schreib-)Kultur einzudringen. Dies wirkte sich auch auf die Überlieferung der jüdischen Traditionen, meist in Hebräisch geschrieben, aus. Sie wurden mehr und mehr ins Griechische übersetzt bzw. aus hellenistischer Perspektive interpretiert. Dies ist wiederum Ausdruck dafür, dass auch ein gewisses Interesse an dieser jüdischen Kultur, die inzwischen dem griechisch-sprechenden Publikum zugänglich gemacht worden ist, bestand⁽⁴³⁾. An der Schwelle der Übertragung der jüdischen Kultur in die hellenistische Welt entsteht u. a. ein Interessentenkreis auf nichtjüdischer Seite, der beginnt, diese Literatur nun auch wahrzunehmen. Dies vermehrt wiederum die Anstrengungen auf jüdischer Seite, die sonst unzugängliche jüdische Tradition für hellenistische Hörer und Leser zu erschließen. Philo, ein reicher, hellenistisch gebildeter Jude, steht an der Schwelle dieses Vermittlungsvorganges. Sympathisanten jüdischer Kultur scheinen wohl in erster Linie als Rezipienten der Schriften Philos in Frage zu kommen⁽⁴⁴⁾. Diese Vermutung gewinnt an Plausibilität, wenn man die Diasporasituation in Alexandrien mit der in Rom zur Zeit des Flavius Josephus vergleicht.

(42) Zur griechisch-sprachigen Verwaltung des Ptolemäerreichs siehe E.A. SAMUEL, "The Ptolemies and the Ideology of Kingship", *Hellenistic History and Culture* (ed. P. GREEN) (Hellenistic Culture and Society 9; Berkeley 1993) 169. Die enorme Anzahl von griechischen Papyri, die ökonomische Belange regeln, weisen auf die Bedeutung der griechischen Sprache in der Verwaltung hin.

(43) Vgl. D. DELIA, "Response" (to E.A. SAMUEL, "The Ptolemies and the Ideology of Kingship"), *Hellenistic History and Culture* (ed. P. GREEN) (Hellenistic Culture and Society 9; Berkeley 1993) 203-204. Das Interesse der Griechen galt zunächst v. a. dem Großreich Ägypten (vgl. Herodot, *Hist.* 2; Diodorus Siculus und Strabo), erst sekundär und allmählich intensiver Juda und seinen Traditionen. Dabei wurde das jüdische Volk meist in Deszendenz von Ägypten gesehen.

(44) Auch BARRACLOUGH, "Philo's Politics. Roman Rule and Hellenistic Judaism", 446, 450-451, rechnet zumindest teilweise mit heidnischen, u. a. römischen Zuhörern bzw. Lesern der Schriften Philos, besonders bei *Legatio ad Gaium* und *In Flaccum*.

Nach den jüdisch-römischen Auseinandersetzungen in den Jahren 66-70 n. Chr. kam Josephus als Gefangener nach Rom, wo er sich alsbald günstiger Lebensumstände erfreuen konnte, die er dazu nützte, dem römischen Publikum die Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes in mehreren Werken darzustellen. Im Vorwort zu seinem umfangreichsten Werk, den 'Antiquitates', das er 93 n. Chr. beendete, erwähnt Josephus lobend den Kulturmäzen König Ptolemäus II. Dieser habe aus Wißbegierde jüdische Gesetzesbücher, die der damalige Hohepriester Eleasar zur Verfügung stellte, in Alexandria ins Griechische übertragen lassen (*Ant.* 1.10-11). Josephus als Verfasser der 'Antiquitates' sieht sich somit in der Funktion eines Hohepriesters, der im Wissen um die wertvollen Inhalte der Gesetzesbücher nichts davon vor den alexandrinischen Ptolemäern verbarg (*Ant.* 1.11-12). Die Rolle des königlichen Kunstmäzens erfüllt für Josephus u. a. ein gebildeter und reicher Mann namens Epaphroditus (*Ant.* 1.8). Dieser sei in großen Angelegenheiten und vielfältigen Schicksalen erfahren gewesen. Das bedeutet, dass Epaphroditus am politischen Leben, d.h. am kaiserlichen Verwaltungsapparat im weitesten Sinne beteiligt war. Ob dieser Epaphroditus mit dem gleichnamigen Sekretär Neros zu identifizieren ist, kann aus den Quellen nicht positiv bestätigt werden⁽⁴⁵⁾. Dennoch scheint dieser Identifizierungsvorschlag das soziale Milieu anzugeben, in dem Josephus seine Schriften vortragen konnte. Ein gebildeter, politisch erfahrener Kreis von Nichtjuden scheint sich am Ende des 1. Jh. n. Chr. für die jüdische Tradition in hellenistischem Kleid zu interessieren. Unter den Sympathisanten jüdischer Traditionen befinden sich hohe römische Beamte wie z. B. die zwei Konsulen T. Flavius Clemens mit Gattin Flavia Domitilla und M. Acilius Glabrio. Zur Zeit des Kaisers Domitian wurden beide hingerichtet und die Gattin Domitilla des Landes verwiesen. Als Grund dafür gibt Cassius Dio (67,14.2) die judaisierenden Tendenzen dieser Personen an⁽⁴⁶⁾. Dies beweist, dass in Rom zumindest einige

(45) Zu dieser Möglichkeit vgl. S. MASON, "'Should any wish to enquire further' (*Ant.* 1.25)": The aim and audience of Josephus' *Judean Antiquities/Life*", *Understanding Josephus. Seven Perspectives* (ed. S. MASON) (JSPSS 32, Sheffield 1998) 98-100. Der Vorschlag, Epaphroditus mit dem Sekretär Neros zu identifizieren, geht auf H. Luther, einen Schüler Niese's, zurück (1910). Josephus widmete Epaphroditus auch noch sein Werk *Contra Apionem* (1.1) und seine Selbstbiographie (430).

(46) Siehe dazu MASON, "'Should any wish to enquire further' (*Ant.* 1.25)", 97.

reiche, politisch einflußreiche Leute reges Interesse an jüdischer Kultur gezeigt haben. Josephus kam mit seiner schriftstellerischen Tätigkeit dieser Nachfrage entgegen. Es ist gut vorstellbar, dass er vor allem von diesen und ähnlichen Zirkeln unterstützt wurde. Das Interesse an der jüdischen Kultur ging sogar soweit, dass sich Römer offen als Sympathisanten der Juden, als Proselyten, bekannten, die den Weg der Bekehrung zu den jüdischen Traditionen betreten hatten. Die Schriften Josephus' scheinen insbesondere diese Menschen als Adressaten im Blick zu haben. Zur Bestätigung dieser Schlußfolgerungen soll im folgenden auf das Thema Umkehr bzw. Umdenken als wichtiges Textgestaltungselement in den Schriften Philo und Josephus' hingewiesen werden. Für die Eruierung der Adressatenschaft von Weisheit wird sich diese thematische Parallele als besonders bedeutungsvoll erweisen.

VI. Umkehr, Umdenken als Themen von Weish

Das Thema 'Umkehr, Umdenken' ist den hellenistischen Philosophenschulen und den jüdischen, später auch christlichen Traditionen teilweise gemein⁽⁴⁷⁾. Der Logos protreptikos ist das schriftliche Genus, das 'Umdenken' zur jeweiligen Philosophenschule bzw. -gruppe zum Ausdruck bringt. So ist Ciceros 'Hortensius' ein Beispiel einer solchen Werbeschrift, die noch Augustinus überzeugte, sich der Philosophie zu widmen (Augustinus, *Conf.* 3.4.7)⁽⁴⁸⁾.

Philo von Alexandria heißt die Konvertiten willkommen. Mitbürger des jüdischen Politeuma ist derjenige, der sich unter das jüdische Gesetz stellt. Proselyten bzw. Epelyten sind zu denselben Bedingungen zum jüdischen Politeuma zugelassen wie die geborenen Juden. Die Proselyten erhalten diese Zusage von Gott, weil sie die Vergangenheit verlassen haben und sich zur Frömmigkeit bekehrt haben⁽⁴⁹⁾. Darüber hinaus widmet Philo in seinem Werk *De virtutibus* dem Thema 'Umkehr' einen ganzen Abschnitt (*De virt.* 175-186)⁽⁵⁰⁾.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ MASON, "'Should any wish to enquire further' (Ant. 1.25)", 88-89, gibt die Philosophie als Domäne an, in der von Konversion (*conversio*), Umdenken (*μετάνοια*) und Entscheidung für einen neuen Lebensweg gesprochen wird.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Siehe MASON, "'Should any wish to enquire further' (Ant. 1.25)", 88.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Siehe dazu S. SANDMEL, "Philo Judaeus: An Introduction to the Man, his Writings, and his Significance", *ANRW* 21.1 (1984) 29.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Vgl. dazu J.N. BAILEY, "*Metanoia* in the Writings of Philo Judaeus", *SBL.SP* 30 (1991) 138-139; bezüglich der Adressaten kommt Bailey zu folgendem

Diese kurzen Hinweise mögen genügen, um die Bedeutung des Themas 'Umkehr' in den Schriften Philos hervorzuheben.

Ähnliches gilt für Flavius Josephus. In seinem Werk 'Antiquitates' berichtet Josephus siebenmal von Bekehrungen⁽⁵¹⁾. Die längste Bekehrungserzählung steht pointiert im letzten Buch des Werkes (*Ant.* 20.17-96). Zudem muß hervorgehoben werden, dass es eine königliche Familie ist, die sich zum Ethos der Juden bekehrt (*Ant.* 20.17). Es handelt sich dabei um Helena, die Königin der Adiabener, und ihren Sohn Izates, der die Herrschaft über die Adiabener nach dem Tod seines Vaters übernommen hat. Izates wird dabei als Rezipient jüdischer Gesetzestexte, in die jüdische Gesetzeskundige ihn einführen, vorgestellt (20.43-45). Adressat der jüdischen Belehrung ist eine heidnische Königsfamilie, die den jüdischen Traditionen reges Interesse entgegenbringt. Dies entspricht der Situation Josephus' in Rom, insofern er für interessierte, judaisierende Notable geschrieben hat. Als weiteren Hinweis für die Bedeutung des Themas 'Umkehr' muß auf Josephus' Präsentation der jüdischen 'Parteiungen' verwiesen werden⁽⁵²⁾. Pharisäer, Sadduzäer, Essener usw. werden als philosophische Wege ausgegeben, die je eigene Akzente in ihren Lehren gesetzt hätten. Diese unterschiedlichen philosophischen Wege seien die eigentliche Basis der jüdischen Parteiungen, nicht deren 'Instrumentalisierung' im jüdisch-römischen Konflikt. Josephus selbst stellt sich als ein Philosophenschüler dar, der die verschiedenen jüdischen Wege ausprobiert habe, um sich schließlich den Pharisäern anzuschließen⁽⁵³⁾. Die literarische Annäherung der jüdischen Traditionen an die hellenistische Welt entsprach sicherlich einem Interesse auf römischer Seite, wie dies Konversionen zum Judentum zeigen. Für dieses interessierte, z. T. konversionswillige Publikum hat Josephus geschrieben, von ihm wurde er auch ermutigt und unterstützt⁽⁵⁴⁾.

Schluß (S. 139): "...it is addressed to a mixed audience of Proselytes and ethnic Jews, encouraging Proselytes to recognize the importance of their own conversion, and urging ethnic Jews to fully accept Proselytes who have turned to God in repentance and who are more godly than ethnic Jews who have abandoned the Law".

⁽⁵¹⁾ Josephus, *Ant.* 13.257-258, 318-319, 397; 18.81-84; 20.139, 145; vgl. dazu MASON, "'Should any wish to enquire further' (*Ant.* 1.25)", 90.

⁽⁵²⁾ Vgl. die Texte Josephus, *BJ* 2.119-166; *Ant.* 18.11-25; *Vita* 10; zur gesamten Einschätzung dieses Konzepts 'jüdische Gruppierungen' vgl. G. STEMBERGER, *Pharisäer, Sadduzäer, Essener* (SBS 144; Stuttgart 1991).

⁽⁵³⁾ Siehe Josephus, *Vita* 10-12.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ Ähnliches gilt für Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, vgl. Chr. GERBER, *Ein*

Steht die Bedeutung der Konversion für die Diaspora in Alexandria und Rom im 1.Jh. n. Chr. außer Zweifel⁽⁵⁵⁾, so muß anschließend noch für das Buch der Weisheit die zentrale Stellung dieses Themas nachgezeichnet werden.

Zunächst ist auf folgendes sprachliches Charakteristikum hinzuweisen. Die LXX übersetzt das hebr. Verb שׁוּב, das dem Thema 'Umkehr' semantisch nahe steht, sehr unterschiedlich. Zu etwa 70% dominieren Verbalformen von στρέφειν 'wenden'. Dies entspricht zweifelsfrei einer Grundbedeutung des Bewegungsverbs שׁוּב. Bemerkenswert ist, dass weder μετάνοια noch μετανοεῖν zur Wiedergabe des hebr. שׁוּב verwendet werden. Erst die Bibelübersetzungen des 2. Jh. n. Chr. (v. a. Symmachus) zeigen eine allmähliche Annäherung dieser Begriffe⁽⁵⁶⁾. Hellenistische Philosophen, die von μετάνοια sprechen, meinen damit eine "reueige Änderung des Urteils, durch Umdenken, dh durch Korrektur seiner fehlsamen Einsichten"⁽⁵⁷⁾. Der Begriff kommt auch bei Philo und Josephus des öfteren vor⁽⁵⁸⁾. Dabei nähert sich Philo dem stoischen Ideal, dass der

Bild des Judentums für Nichtjuden von Flavius Josephus. Untersuchungen zu seiner Schrift Contra Apionem (AGJU 40, Leiden 1997) 89-91: "So ist offensichtlich, daß die intendierten Leser des Josephus zuallererst Nichtjuden sind, Griechen oder Römer, mit Achtung vor griechischer Denktradition und römischer Macht" (S. 90-91). Juden seien lediglich mittelbar Adressaten.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Davon zu unterscheiden ist die Frage, ob die Juden aktiv Proselytismus und 'Mission' betrieben haben. Kritisch dazu z. B. M. GOODMAN, "Jewish Proselytizing in the First Century", *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (eds. J. LIEU – J. NORTH – T. RAJAK) (London 1992) 53-78; und E. WILL – C. ORRIEUX, "Prosélytisme juif?" *Histoire d'une erreur* (Histoire; Paris 1992) v. a. 81-101: Da die Umkehr eines Heiden zum Judentum einzig von der göttlichen Gnade abhängt, sei kein Einfluß auf die pagane Bevölkerung möglich. Ist damit jedoch schon gesagt, dass Philo sich an Heiden lediglich aus apologetischen Gründen gewandt, ansonsten jedoch die jüdischen Apostaten als Adressaten vor Augen gehabt habe?

⁽⁵⁶⁾ Vgl. H.-J. FABRY, שׁוּב, *TWAT* VII, 1168-1169, 1176.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ J. BEHM, "μετανοέω μετάνοια. A. Der griechische Sprachgebrauch", *TWNT* IV, 976; Belegstellen auf den Seiten 972-976. Zu einer kritischen Auseinandersetzung mit dem Artikel von J. BEHM – C. WÜRTHWEIN siehe A. TOSATO, "Per una revisione degli studi sulla metanoia neotestamentaria", *RivBib* 23 (1975) 3-45; auf den Seiten 39-45 werden relevante Texte aus Weish und den Werken von Josephus Flavius und Philo angeführt; vgl. noch zusätzlich L. ALVAREZ VERDES, "μετάνοια – μετανοεῖν en el griego extrabíblico", *Homenaje a Juan Prado* (eds. L. ALVAREZ VERDES – E.J. ALONSO HERNANDEZ) (Madrid 1975) 503-525 (v. a. die Zusammenfassung auf den Seiten 523-525).

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Zu den Belegstellen vgl. J. BEHM, "μετανοέω μετάνοια", 988-991; zu Philo vgl. BAILEY, "Metanoia in the Writings of Philo Judaeus", 135-141 und

Weise über eine μετάνοια erhaben ist (*De fuga et inventione* 157). Philo unterstreicht aber zugleich, dass der Weg des Weisen direkt in die jüdische Tradition hineinführt: "Von der Vielheit der Götzen sich dem einen, allein wirklichen Gott zuwenden, ist das erste und wesentlichste Stück der μετάνοια" (*De virt.* 179-180; *De spec. leg.* 1.51 vgl. 58).

Im Buch der Weish kommt das Nomen μετάνοια in Weish 11,23; 12,10.19 vor, das Verb μετανοεῖν in Weish 5,3. Allein schon die Verwendung dieser Begriffe weist darauf hin, dass sich der Autor dem hellenistischen Kulturkreis angenähert hat. Ob damit auch das Phänomen der 'Konversion' angesprochen ist, gilt es im folgenden zu untersuchen.

In Weish 5,3 ist das erste Mal die Rede von Umdenken μετανοεῖν. Dieser Vers eröffnet eine Rede der Gegner des Gerechten: 'Sie werden bei sich sagen und umdenken' ἐποῦσιν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς μετανοοῦντες. Die folgende Rede 5,4-13 gibt den Inhalt der neuen, veränderten Ansichten der Sprecher wider und ruft zugleich die Rede in 2,1-20 ins Gedächtnis, die von deren alten Plänen berichtet. Der Autor kennzeichnet schon in 2,21 die Pläne und Gedanken der Sprecher von 2,1-20 als Irrtum. Demgegenüber ist die Rede 5,4-13 ein Ausdruck der Abkehr vom Irrtum⁽⁵⁹⁾. Es kann von Umdenken bzw. Umkehr in diesem Fall gesprochen werden. Wenn in 5,3 das Verb ἐποῦσιν verwendet wird, so gilt die Umkehr aus der Sicht des Autors noch als zukünftiges Ereignis. Demgegenüber ist die irrige Einstellung ein Faktum der Vergangenheit, wie die Verwendung der Aorist-Verbformen in 1,16-2,1 zeigt. Die irrige Einstellung wird figürlich vorgestellt in einem Pakt der Menschen mit dem Tod (1,16). Damit sind diese Gegner des wahren Lebens, welches figürlich in der Gestalt des Gerechten dargestellt wird. Das, was die 'Irrenden' selbst als ihr Leben darstellen, ist in Wirklichkeit ein trügerisches Bild, das jene Menschen besitzen, die im Pakt mit dem Tod stehen.

D. WINSTON, "Philo's Doctrine of Repentance", *The School of Moses. Studies in Philo and Hellenistic Religion in Memory of Horst R. Moehring* (ed. J.P. KENNEY) (BJSt 304, StPhilo Monographs 1; Atlanta 1995) 29-40.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ D. LÜHRMANN, "Henoch und die Metanoia", *ZNW* 66 (1975) 110-111, vermutet in Weish 4,7-5,14 eine nicht explizite Interpretation Henochs als Prototyp des Gerechten, der zu Umkehr motivieren soll. Siehe dazu auch SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, I, 267-273. Dies entspräche dem Abschnitt Weish 10,1-13, in dem bekannte Gestalten der biblischen Geschichte ohne Namen als Gerechte angeführt werden.

Diese Erkenntnis ist dem Autor und Rezipienten schon von vornherein offenbar. Die Textgestalten 'Frevler' (1,16) werden erst in einer unbestimmten Zukunft zu dieser Erkenntnis gelangen. Es wird aber kein Zweifel daran gelassen, dass an dieser Einsicht, d.h. an der Umkehr kein Weg vorbeigeht. Geht man davon aus, dass mit Kapitel 7 ein neuer Textabschnitt in Weish beginnt⁽⁶⁰⁾, so erfährt das Thema 'Umdenken, Umkehr' eine zentrale rahmende Stellung im ersten Hauptteil Weish 1–6. Zudem kommen noch im Zentrum dieses Abschnittes (Weish 3–5) drei Modelle des Kontrastes bzw. des Umdenkens vor⁽⁶¹⁾.

Der Autor dieser Kapitel gibt seiner Gewißheit Ausdruck, dass angesichts des universalen Schöpfers allen Lebens die Umkehr zur Quelle des Lebens unausweichlich ist. Vielleicht hat der Autor nicht von ungefähr die Lebensauffassung der 'Frevler' als von allen hellenistisch-gebildeten Menschen erkennbare 'Parodie' auf Gedanken gewählt, die u. a. an die epikuräische Schule erinnern (Weish 2)⁽⁶²⁾. Der Aufruf zur Umkehr geht über die Grenze des jüdischen Ethnos hinaus, er ist im Grunde universal, d.h. an alle Herrscher der Erde (1,1) gerichtet. Die Quelle des Lebens läßt sich von allen finden (1,2).

Das Nomen *μετάνοια* kommt in Weish 11,23 bzw. 12,10.19 vor. Diese Verse gehören zu der größeren Texteinheit 11,15–12,27. Der Vers 11,15 unterbricht eine begonnene Beispielreihe von sieben Vergleichen, in denen Gottes Wirken an seinem Volk und dessen Feinden kontrastierend verdeutlicht wird⁽⁶³⁾. Als Grundlage dieser Paradigmenreihe hat der Autor die Exoduserzählung ausgewählt. Wurde schon in 11,5 die Quintessenz der Vergleiche vorgelegt 'Denn was ihren Feinden zur Strafe wurde, das empfangen sie als Wohltat

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Zur Struktur des Weisheitsbuches vgl. GILBERT, "Sagesse de Salomon (ou Livre de la Sagesse)", 65-77, und DERS., "La Sagesse de Salomon", 323-331. Auf Seite 325 gibt Gilbert folgende konzentrische Struktur für Weish 1–6,21 an: A. *Exhortation aux princes* 1,1-12; B. *Projet des impies* 1,13–2,24; C. *Trois types d'existence paradoxales et leur contraste* 3–4; B'. *Bilan des impies* 5,1-23; A'. *Exhortation aux princes* 6 (Annonce de ce qui suit [6,22-25]).

⁽⁶¹⁾ GILBERT, "La Sagesse de Salomon", 325: (1) "le juste mourant dans la souffrance – les impies"; (2) "la stérile et l'eunuque – la descendance des impies"; (3) le juste mourant prématurément – les foules impies".

⁽⁶²⁾ Vgl. dazu SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, I, 136-143. Die Schule Epikurs übte in der Antike größten Einfluß aus; vgl. dazu M. ERLER, "Epikur. Die Schule Epikurs. Lukrez", *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie*. Die Philosophie der Antike (Hrsg. H. FLASHAR) (Basel 1994) IV, 29-490.

⁽⁶³⁾ GILBERT, "La Sagesse de Salomon", 328-330.

in ihrer Not.', so verwundert die Unterbrechung der Beispielreihe in 11,15. Der Sinn des Abschnitts 11,15–12,2 (bzw. 12,27) liegt wohl darin, dem Textrezipienten eine zusätzliche Interpretationshilfe darzureichen. Der Autor versucht zu verdeutlichen, wie Gott 'die Ägypter' strafte — nämlich mit Nachsicht —, und zu welchem Zweck er das tat, — nämlich dass sie sich bekehrten. 11,23: ἐλεεῖς δὲ πάντα ὅτι πάντα δύνασαι καὶ παροργῆς ἁμαρτήματα ἀνθρώπων εἰς μετάνοιαν 'Du hast mit allen Erbarmen, weil du alles vermagst und über Vergehen der Menschen hinwegsiehst auf das Umdenken'. Als Grund dieser gütigen Einstellung Gottes wird seine Liebe zu allem, was er geschaffen hat, angeführt (11,24–26)⁽⁶⁴⁾. Der erste Schritt Richtung Umdenken, Umkehr besteht darin, sich von der Schlechtigkeit abzuwenden und an den Herrn zu glauben (12,2 ἵνα ἀπαλλαγέντες τῆς κακίας πιστεύσωσιν ἐπὶ σέ, κύριε 'damit sie von der Schlechtigkeit sich abgewandt an dich, Herr, glauben'). Auch wenn die Situation aus der Perspektive Gottes aussichtslos erscheint, zögert Gott mit seiner Strafe und läßt dadurch trotz Widerstand eine Möglichkeit zur Umkehr offen. 12,10: κρίνων δὲ κατὰ βραχὺ ἐδίδους τόπον μετανοίας 'du urteilst nach und nach und gabst Gelegenheit zum Umdenken'.

Da jedoch nicht nur die Ägypter, die Feinde Israels, Vergehen und Sünden gegen Gott begangen haben, sondern auch die Israeliten selbst, wird dieser Grundsatz auch auf das Volk Israel anwendbar (vgl. 12,18–22). Das Eingreifen Gottes auf Grund menschlicher Vergehen wird für den verständigen Israeliten zur Erziehung, für den hartnäckigen Leugner der Erkenntnis des wahren Gottes zur unermesslichen Geißelung (12,22). Dennoch ist das Volk Gottes dazu angehalten, die Hoffnung auf die Umkehr des Sünders nicht aufzugeben. 12,19: 'und du erwecktest in deinen Söhnen die Hoffnung, dass du den Sünden Umdenken/Umkehr hinzufügst' καὶ εὐέλπιδας ἐποίησας τοὺς υἱοὺς σου ὅτι διδοῖς ἐπὶ ἁμαρτήμασιν μετάνοιαν. Diese Hoffnung liegt im gütigen Verhalten Gottes selbst verankert. Der Autor von Weish zieht daraus für sein Volk die Konsequenz, dass der idealtypische Gerechte menschenfreundlich (φιλόανθρωπος)⁽⁶⁵⁾ sein muß. Das Volk Gottes, das nicht direkt mit dem Gerechten identifiziert wird (12,19), sei diesem Grundsatz deswegen verpflichtet, weil es sich erst noch vor dem

⁽⁶⁴⁾ Siehe dazu SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, II, 385–393.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ Zur Philanthropia als ptolemäisches Königsideal vgl. SAMUEL, "The Ptolemies and the Ideology of Kingship", 189–192, und DELIA, "Response", 201–202.

göttlichen Gericht verantworten muß und sich darin auf das Erbarmen Gottes angewiesen sieht (12,22).

Geht man davon aus, dass der Abschnitt Weish 11,15-12,27 als hermeneutische Lesehilfe für die gesamte Paradigmenreihe 11,1-14; 16,1-19,22 in den Text eingefügt ist, so leuchtet die zentrale Bedeutung der Umkehrthematik für den gesamten dritten Abschnitt des Buches Weish ein. Das Faktum der Textwelt Ex-Dtn, die Befreiung der Israeliten aus der Hand der Ägypter, ist dem Autor vorgegeben. Seine besondere Leistung wird wohl darin zu sehen sein, dass er dieser Textwelt eine systematisch geordnete Paradigmenreihe abgewinnen kann, die nach dem Grundsatz funktioniert, dass ein und dieselbe wirkmächtige Naturgewalt für Israel eine Wohltat, für seine Feinde Untergang bedeutet. Die wahre Erkenntnis der Schöpfung bedarf daher nicht nur der genauen Analyse des Phänomens, sondern auch desjenigen, der dieses Phänomen bewirkt. Umkehr, Umdenken bedeutet in diesem Kontext Erkenntnis des lebendigen Gottes und seiner Werke. Der Dreh- und Angelpunkt für alle Menschen ist der Gott, der sich den Seinen zu erkennen gibt⁽⁶⁶⁾. Wendepunkt aller Gotteserkenntnis ist diese göttliche Weisheit, die sich den Gerechten offenbart. Davon ist vor allem im 2. Hauptteil des Weisheitsbuches (7-9) die Rede. Dass in diesem Zusammenhang nicht direkt von 'Umdenken/Umkehr' die Rede ist, braucht nicht zu verwundern, da in diesem Abschnitt der Weise selbst der göttlichen Weisheit ein 'Loblied'⁽⁶⁷⁾ anstimmt bzw. um die Weisheit betet (Weish 9).

Die Überlegungen zu Weish 11,5-19,22 helfen wiederum, den Adressatenkreis von Weish zu charakterisieren. Zunächst muß gerade auch in diesem Abschnitt auf die universale Dimension der Textgestaltung hingewiesen werden. Die konkrete Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes erhält durch die hermeneutische Lesehilfe in Weish 11-12 (13-15) eine universal-menschliche Aussagedimension. Alle Menschen werden in den Wirkkreis des barmherzigen Gottes gestellt. Die sieben Beispiele aus der Geschichte Israels, die die zentrale Bedeutung der Gotteserkenntnis angesichts der Erklärung der allen Menschen zugänglichen Naturerscheinungen betonen, dienen dazu, den Sinn der Strafe Gottes zu verdeutlichen. Es geht darum, allen Menschen die Umkehr, das Umdenken zum wahren Gott zu ermöglichen (vgl. Weish 13-15).

⁽⁶⁶⁾ Die zweite Lesehilfe zur Beispielreihe in 11,5-14; 15,1-19,22 ist der wahren Gotteserkenntnis gewidmet und umfaßt die Verse 13,1-15,19.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Vgl. GILBERT, "Sagesse de Salomon (ou Livre de la Sagesse)", 69-71.

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Das Buch der Weish wendet sich an die Herrscher der Erde (1,1). Diese werden in ihrer Funktion als Führer ihrer Völker aufgerufen, sich der Weisheit, die der königliche Herrscher aus Israel verkündet, zu öffnen. Erste Adressaten der Botschaft von Umdenken und Umkehr sind somit die Führer der Völker. Historischer Hintergrund für diese Kommunikationssituation bilden die Königshöfe, an denen verschiedenste Gelehrte als Berater und Verwalter der Könige fungierten. Im Umkreis der Königshöfe wurde auf verschiedenste Weise kulturelles Erbe gepflogen und tradiert. Alexandria zur Zeit Philos oder Rom zur Zeit Josephus' sind zwei Beispiele derartiger Königs- bzw. Kaiserhöfe. Der König als Eroberer fremder Völker zeigt sich zumindest in seiner Propaganda auch als Erbe der kulturellen Traditionen unterworfenen Völker. Dies gilt z. B. für die ptolemäischen Könige in Alexandria, die die kulturellen Traditionen der unterworfenen ägyptischen und jüdischen Bevölkerungsteile, die in dieser Stadt zusammenwohnten, teilweise übernahmen bzw. zumindest mit einem gewissen Interesse zur Kenntnis nahmen. Wie dieser Prozeß konkret vor sich ging, läßt sich nicht mehr genau rekonstruieren.

Es ist auch kaum mehr auszumachen, für wen konkret die jüdischen Schriftsteller vom 2. Jh. v. – 1. Jh. n. Chr. ihre Werke abfaßten. Lediglich Flavius Josephus deutete in seinen Werken an, für wen er schrieb und wer ihn dabei unterstützte. Sein Mäzen namens Epaphroditus scheint ein reicher römischer, nicht-jüdischer Bürger gewesen zu sein, der an der schriftstellerischen Tätigkeit Josephus' reges Interesse zeigte. Ob dieser Epaphroditus mit dem neronischen Kaiserhof verbunden werden kann, bleibt offen. Dennoch geht aus den Schriften hervor, welchem Ambiente die Adressaten der Schriften Josephus' zuzurechnen sind. Es handelte sich dabei um reiche, römische Bürger, die zu den jüdischen Traditionen eine gewisse Sympathie hegten. Diese Sympathie konnte sogar soweit gehen, dass sich die Adressaten dem Kreis jüdischer Traditionsträger zurechneten.

Das Phänomen der 'Konversion', des 'Umdenkens', das in den Schriften Josephus' und auch Philos eine nicht unbedeutende Rolle spielt, veranlaßte mich dazu, das Buch der Weish auf ähnliche Textsignale zu befragen. Tatsächlich hat die betreffende Untersuchung gezeigt, dass das Thema der μετένοια im ersten und dritten Hauptteil, der auch explizit von 'Gegnern und Feinden' der göttlichen Weisheit

spricht, eine zentrale Bedeutung besitzt. Von daher darf mit aller Vorsicht ein Vergleich der Adressatenschaft zwischen den Schriften Philo bzw. Josephus' und dem Buch der Weish gezogen werden. Als Adressaten der 'Umkehrbotschaft' in Weish kommen vor allem interessierte 'Heiden' in Frage, die der jüdischen Tradition und deren Tradenten Aufmerksamkeit schenkten. Freilich bewegten sich auch die jüdischen Tradenten auf ihre Adressaten zu, indem sie deren kulturellen Hintergrund in die Präsentation ihrer eigenen Traditionen miteinbezogen. Das hellenistische Gesicht jüdischer Traditionen ist in Weish offenbar. Das Weisheitsbuch gibt sich dabei als Werbeschrift für die jüdische 'Philo-Sophia' aus, die ihre eigentliche Quelle in der 'Theologie' der heiligen Schriften besitzt. Damit bleibt die Frage nach Gott, nach der wahren Gotteserkenntnis im Zentrum des Interesses. Eine Antwort auf diese Frage kann nur als Geschenk Gottes, als göttliche Offenbarung angesehen werden, um die der Weise betet (Weish 9).

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SUMMARY

This article examines the positions of scholars with regard to the addressees of the Book of Wisdom. It turns out that, generally speaking, neither 'Pagans' nor 'Jews' are the recipients of the Book of Wisdom. If Wisdom cannot be considered primarily a political work, the Book's instruction to its addressees, 'Kings and Rulers', seems rather to point to a literary model in ancient Jewish texts from the 1st century B.C. to the 1st century A.D. Our knowledge of the primary recipients of the writings of Philo of Alexandria and Flavius Josephus confirms this. The themes of 'conversion' and 'changing one's approach' give these texts, especially the Book of Wisdom, a very particular orientation. Appropriate addressees are above all pagans who are well-off and culturally involved, and who show an interest in Jewish traditions.

The Chiastic Structure and Meaning of Paul's Letter to Philemon

Although chiastic structures of Paul's letter to Philemon have been proposed in the past, none has proven to be entirely satisfactory⁽¹⁾. Not convincing as true chiasms, they have failed to disclose the real purpose of the letter⁽²⁾. We wish to propose a more compelling chiastic structure and to utilize its rhetorical function to reveal more precisely the purpose and meaning of this shortest and subtlest of Paul's letters⁽³⁾.

(¹) A chiastic structure of five pairs of parallel units, instead of the nine-part system offered by T. BOYS, *Tactica Sacra* (London 1824) 65-66, was proposed by N.W. LUND, *Chiasmus in the New Testament. A Study in Formgeschichte* (Chapel Hill 1942) 219. A more complex chiastic structure of ten pairs of parallel units has more recently been proposed by J.W. WELCH, "Chiasmus in the New Testament", *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis* (ed. J.W. WELCH) (Hildesheim 1981) 225. The center of both of these proposed chiasms consists of a pair of paralleled units, whereas the center and pivotal point of the chiasm that we are proposing consists of one unparallelled unit. The deficiencies of both Lund's and Welch's proposals, especially at the center of their respective chiasms, have been pointed out by J.D. HARVEY, *Listening to the Text: Oral Patterning in Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids 1998) 279-282. Harvey concluded: 'Both Welch's and Lund's proposals reflect the points of verbal correspondence between the epistolary opening and closing. Each, however, has weaknesses at its center. Neither is particularly compelling' (*ibid.*, 282).

(²) For some alternative, non-chiastic proposals for the structure of Paul's letter to Philemon, see J.L. WHITE, "The Structural Analysis of Philemon: A Point of Departure in the Formal Analysis of the Pauline Letter", *SBL.SP* 1 (1971) 1-47; F.F. CHURCH, "Rhetorical Structure and Design in Paul's Letter to Philemon", *HTR* 71 (1978) 17-33; B.L. MIGLIAZZA, "Text Analysis Observations from Philemon Using Fleming's Stratificational Model", *Notes* 2 (1988) 36-48; A.H. SNYMAN, "A Semantic Discourse Analysis of the Letter to Philemon", *Text and Interpretation. New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament* (eds. P.J. HARTIN – J.H. PETZER) (NTTS 15; Leiden 1991) 83-99; D.L. ALLEN, "The Discourse Structure of Philemon: A Study in Textlinguistics", *Scribes and Scriptures. New Testament Essays in Honor of J. Harold Greenlee* (ed. D.A. BLACK) (Winona Lake 1992) 77-96; D.M. RUSSELL, "The Strategy of a First-Century Appeals Letter: A Discourse Reading of Paul's Epistle to Philemon", *Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics* 11 (1998) 1-25.

(³) On the significance of chiastic structures, see R.E. MAN, "The Value of Chiasm for New Testament Interpretation", *BSac* 141 (1984) 146-157;

To be truly convincing a chiastic structure must adhere to rigorous criteria and methodology⁽⁴⁾. It must be evident that the chiasm has not been *imposed upon* the text but actually subsists and operates *within* the text. First, we will demonstrate how Paul's letter to Philemon naturally divides itself into nine distinct literary units based upon verbal repetitions and syntax within each unit. Secondly, we will demonstrate how these nine units form an A-B-C-D-E-D'-C'-B'-A' chiastic pattern based upon precise verbal parallels between the chastically paired units. Thirdly, through a close, audience-oriented listening to the sequence of these units within the letter, we will demonstrate how their chiastic structure operates rhetorically to indicate what exactly Paul is so deftly communicating in this most sensitively and tactfully persuasive letter⁽⁵⁾.

A. STOCK, "Chiastic Awareness and Education in Antiquity", *BTB* 14 (1984) 23-27; J. BRECK, "Biblical Chiasmus: Exploring Structure for Meaning", *BTB* 17 (1987) 70-74.

(⁴) The criteria and methodology for determining a true chiastic structure are discussed by C.L. BLOMBERG, "The Structure of 2 Corinthians 1-7", *Criswell Theological Review* 4 (1989) 4-8; I.H. THOMSON, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters* (JSNTSS 111; Sheffield 1995) 13-45. See also S.E. PORTER – J.T. REED, "Philippians as a Macro-Chiasm and Its Exegetical Significance", *NTS* 44 (1998) 213-231. Very useful is Blomberg's list of nine criteria for detecting an extended chiasmus: (1) there must be a problem in perceiving the structure of the text in question, which more conventional outlines fail to resolve; (2) there must be clear examples of parallelism between the two 'halves' of the hypothesized chiasmus, to which commentators call attention even when they propose quite different outlines for the text overall; (3) verbal (or grammatical) parallelism as well as conceptual (or structural) parallelism should characterize most if not all of the corresponding pairs of subdivisions; (4) the verbal parallelism should involve central or dominant imagery or terminology, not peripheral or trivial language; (5) both verbal and conceptual parallelism should involve words and ideas not regularly found elsewhere within the proposed chiasmus; (6) multiple sets of correspondences between passages opposite each other in the chiasmus as well as multiple members of the chiasmus itself are desirable; (7) the outline should divide the text at natural breaks which would be agreed upon even by those proposing very different structures to account for the whole; (8) the center of the chiasmus, which forms its climax, should be a passage worthy of that position in light of its theological or ethical significance; (9) ruptures in the outline should be avoided if at all possible.

(⁵) Many interpreters think that it is rather unclear as to what exactly Paul wants of his audience in this letter. Typical is J.M.G. BARCLAY, "Paul, Philemon and the Dilemma of Christian Slave-Ownership", *NTS* 37 (1991) 170-171: '[T]he letter is skilfully (*sic*) designed to constrain Philemon to accept Paul's

We propose the following Chiastic Structure of Paul's letter to Philemon

A ¹Paul a prisoner of *Christ Jesus* (Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ) and Timothy the brother to Philemon *our* beloved and fellow worker (συνεργῶ) ² and Apphia the sister and Archippus *our* fellow soldier and the assembly at your house. ³Grace (χάρις) to you (ὕμιν) and peace from God *our* Father and the Lord *Jesus Christ* (κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ).

B ⁴I thank (Εὐχαριστῶ) my God every time I make mention of you *in* my prayers (προσευχῶν), ⁵hearing of your *love* and *faith*, which you have toward the Lord (κύριον) Jesus and *for* all the *holy ones*, ⁶ that the partnership of your *faith* might become effective in the recognition of all the GOOD (ἀγαθοῦ) that is among us *for* Christ (Χριστόν). ⁷For (γὰρ) I have had much joy and encouragement *in* your *love* (τῇ ἀγάπῃ σου), because the hearts (τὰ σπλάγχνα) of the *holy ones* have been refreshed (ἀναπέπνυται) through (διὰ) you, brother (ἀδελφέ).

C ⁸Therefore, though having much boldness in *Christ* to command to you (σοι) what is proper, ⁹ on account of love I would rather *appeal*, being as I am, Paul (Παῦλος), an old man and now also a *prisoner of Christ Jesus*. ¹⁰ I *appeal* to you (σε) for my (ἐμοῦ) child, whom I have begotten in *prison*, Onesimus,

D ¹¹ *who* was once to you useless but now is indeed both *to you* (σοι) and *to me* (ἐμοί) useful, ¹² *whom* I am sending back *to you*, him (αὐτόν), that is *my* (ἐμὰ) heart, ¹³ *whom* I wanted to keep (κατέχειν) for *myself*, so that (ἵνα) he might serve on *your* (σοῦ) behalf *me* (μοι) in the imprisonment of the gospel,

E ¹⁴ but without *your* (σῆς) consent I resolved TO DO (ποιῆσαι) nothing, so that (ἵνα) *your* (σου) GOOD (ἀγαθόν) might not be as *under* compulsion but rather *under* benevolence.

D' ¹⁵ For perhaps it was for this reason he was separated for awhile, so that (ἵνα) you might *have him* (αὐτόν) back (ἀπέχης) forever, ¹⁶ no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially *to me* (ἐμοί), but how much more to you (σοι) both in

request, and yet, at the same time, it is extremely unclear what precisely Paul is requesting! Most recently, C. FRILINGOS, "'For My Child, Onesimus': Paul and Domestic Power in Philemon", *JBL* 119 (2000) 100: 'Still the letter's purpose remains obscure'. Politeness on the part of Paul may partially explain this lack of clarity according to A. WILSON, "The Pragmatics of Politeness and Pauline Epistolography: A Case Study of the Letter to Philemon", *JSNT* 48 (1992) 116. Although Paul's letter to Philemon is very politely and carefully composed, we maintain that the chiasm we are proposing for it clarifies not only what Paul precisely wants of Philemon and the assembly in his house, but also — and just as, if not more, importantly — *why* he wants it.

the flesh and in the Lord. ¹⁷ If then you *have me* as a partner, welcome *him* (αὐτόν) as *me* (ἐμέ).

C' ¹⁸ And if he has wronged *you* (σε) in any way or *owes* you anything, charge it *to me* (ἐμοί). ¹⁹ I, Paul (Παῦλος), am writing in *my own* hand, *I* will repay; but may I not say to *you* (σοι) that you more than *owe me* your very self!

B' ²⁰ Yes, brother (ἀδελφέ), may *I* *benefit* from *you* in the Lord (κυρίῳ); refresh (ἀνάπαυσόν) *my* heart (τὰ σπλάγχνα) in Christ (Χριστῷ). ²¹ Confident of *your* obedience (τῇ ὑπακοῇ σου) I am writing *to you*, knowing that *YOU WILL DO* (ποιήσεις) even more than I say. ²² And at the same time also prepare *for me* a guest room; for (γὰρ) I am hoping that through (διὰ) *your* prayers (προσευχῶν) *I will be granted* (χαρισθήσομαι) *to you*.

A' ²³ Epaphras, my fellow captive in *Christ Jesus* (Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ), greets you, ²⁴ as well as Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers (συνεργοί). ²⁵ The grace (χάρις) of the Lord *Jesus Christ* (κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) be with your (ὁμῶν) spirit⁽⁶⁾.

I. The Nine Units of the Letter

1. Opening Address and Greeting (vv. 1-3)

An inclusion consisting of an inverted repetition of the name Jesus Christ defines the first unit (vv. 1-3) of Paul's letter to Philemon. The unit begins with the opening address of the letter, 'Paul a prisoner of *Christ Jesus*' (v. 1), and concludes with the opening greeting of the letter, 'Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord *Jesus Christ*' (v. 3). Although the titles 'Lord' (v. 5) and 'Christ' (v. 6) appear alone in the second unit (vv. 4-7), the double designation 'Jesus Christ' or 'Christ Jesus' does not occur there, further indicating the distinction of the first from the second unit of the letter.

The occurrence of the pronoun 'our' in each of the three verses further secures the unity of this first unit. Through the first two occurrences Paul draws addressees of the letter closely to himself and Timothy: Philemon is *our* beloved and fellow worker (v. 1); and Archippus is *our* fellow soldier (v. 2). But the third occurrence, as it follows the second person plural address, 'to you' (ὁμῶν), draws

(⁶) This is our own translation. The italicized words indicate the verbal repetitions that define each unit. The Greek words in parentheses indicate the parallels between the chiastically paired units. And the words in small capitals indicate the parallels with the central, pivotal unit of the chiasm (v. 14). The significance of these repetitions and parallels is explained in the following sections.

together both the senders and the recipients of the letter under the fatherhood of God and lordship of Jesus Christ that they share among one another and with all other Christians: 'Grace to you and peace from God *our* Father and the Lord Jesus Christ' (v. 3). Although 'us' (ἡμῖν) occurs in the next unit (v. 6), 'our' (ἡμῶν) occurs only in the opening unit of the letter (vv. 1-3), thus confirming the distinctiveness of this first unit.

2. *Thanksgiving* (vv. 4-7)

An inclusion formed by a repetition of ἐπὶ, which occurs only here in the letter, defines the unity and distinctiveness of the second unit (vv. 4-7), the thanksgiving customary in Pauline letters⁽⁷⁾. The unit begins with Paul thanking God 'in (ἐπὶ) my prayers' (v. 4) and concludes with Paul having much joy and encouragement 'in (ἐπὶ) your love...' (v. 7). These prepositional phrases are conceptually related. It is *in* his prayers that Paul thanks God for the love (v. 5) of Philemon, for it is *in* his love that Paul has had much joy and encouragement (v. 7).

The repetition of εἰς, which likewise occurs only within this unit of the letter, further indicates this unit's singularity. The love (and faith) that Philemon has 'for (εἰς) all the holy ones' (v. 5) is part of 'the good that is among us for (εἰς) Christ' (v. 6).

A chiasmic repetition of the nouns 'love' and 'faith' adds to the unit's coherence. Paul hears of Philemon's (a) love (ἀγάπην) and (b) faith (πίστιν), 'which you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the holy ones' (v. 5). The partnership of Philemon's (b') faith (πίστεώς) 'might become effective in the recognition of all the good that is among us for Christ' (v. 6). For Paul has had much joy and encouragement in Philemon's (a') love (ἀγάπη)...(v. 7)⁽⁸⁾. Although

(7) P. SCHUBERT, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgiving* (BZNW 20; Berlin 1939); J.D.G. DUNN, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids 1996) 315-316.

(8) Neglecting this broader, verbal chiasm involving 'love' and 'faith' in vv. 5-7, scholars often point out a narrower, conceptual chiasm in v. 5: (a) love and (b) faith, (b') which you have toward the Lord Jesus and (a') for all the holy ones; THOMSON, *Chiasmus*, 23; HARVEY, *Listening*, 279; G.J. STEYN, "Some Figures of Style in the Epistle to Philemon: Their Contribution Towards the Persuasive Nature of the Epistle", *Ekklesiastikos Pharos* 77 (1995) 71. DUNN, *Philemon*, 317, rightly questions this proposed chiasmic reading of v. 5: 'But there is no reason why Paul should not have thought of both love and faith as the sum of the Christian lifestyle and therefore of both as related to

the noun 'love' occurs again in the next unit (v. 9; cf. 'beloved' in 1,16), 'faith' occurs only in this unit of the letter, further indicating its individuality.

Finally, the repetition of 'the holy ones', a designation which occurs only in this unit of the letter, confirms the unity and uniqueness of this second unit. Paul has heard of Philemon's love for the holy ones (τοὺς ἁγίους; v. 5) and the hearts of the holy ones (τῶν ἁγίων; v. 7) have been refreshed by Philemon.

3. Appeal (vv. 8-10)

An inclusion formed by a repetition of 'you' referring to Philemon defines the unity of the third unit (vv. 8-10). 'To command what is proper to you (σοι)' occurs at the beginning of this unit (v. 8) and 'I appeal to you (σε)' at the end (v. 10).

The repetition of the words 'Christ' and 'appeal' further defines the unity and distinctiveness of this unit. Paul has much boldness in 'Christ' to command what is proper to Philemon (v. 8), as Paul is a prisoner of 'Christ' Jesus (v. 9). From love Paul would rather appeal (παρακαλῶ) to Philemon (v. 9), and so, 'I appeal (παρακαλῶ) to you' for Onesimus (v. 10). Although the related noun 'encouragement' (παράκλησιν) occurred in the previous unit (v. 7), the verb 'appeal' occurs only in this unit of the letter, thus demonstrating its distinctiveness. The repetition of the very similar words 'prisoner' (δέσμιος, literally 'chained' or 'bonded' in v. 9) and 'prison' (δεσμοῖς, literally 'in chains' or 'in bonds' in v. 10) adds to this unit's cohesiveness.

4. Onesimus (vv. 11-13)

The set of three relative clauses referring to Onesimus, after he has been climactically named for the first and only time in the letter in v. 10, secures the unity and uniqueness of the fourth unit (vv. 11-13): 'who (τόν) was once useless...' (v. 11); 'whom (ὃν) I am sending back...' (v. 12); 'whom (ὃν) I wanted to keep...' (v. 13)⁽⁹⁾. The

both "the Lord Jesus" and "all the saints". See also J. GNILKA, *Der Philemonbrief* (HTKNT 10; Freiburg 1982) 35-36; H. HÜBNER, *An Philemon, An die Kolosser, An die Epheser* (HNT 12; Tübingen 1997) 30.

⁽⁹⁾ Although there is a relative clause referring to Onesimus in v. 10, 'whom (ὃν) I have begotten', it occurs before the climactic naming of Onesimus and before the word 'prison' (δεσμοῖς), which ties v. 10 to v. 9 and thus to the third unit through the parallel with the word 'prisoner' (δέσμιος).

occurrences in every verse of the pronouns referring respectively to Philemon and Paul add to this unit's coherence: '...to you (σοὶ) and to me (ἐμοὶ)...' (v. 11); '...to you (σοι)...my (ἐμὸν) heart' (v. 12); '...I (ἐγὼ)...for myself (ἐμαυτὸν)...on your (σοῦ) behalf he might serve me (μοι)...' (v. 13).

5. *Philemon's Consent* (v. 14)

A break in the syntactical pattern occurs in v. 14, separating it from the preceding unit (vv. 11-13). The sequence of relative clauses referring to Onesimus has concluded, so that the focus has shifted from Onesimus to Philemon. And the previous pattern in which occurrences of the pronoun referring to Philemon were coupled with occurrences of the pronoun referring to Paul has likewise concluded. Now the pronouns refer only to Philemon: 'your (σῆς) consent' and 'your (σου) good' (v. 14). That the focus returns to Onesimus, the subject of the verb in v. 15, confirms that v. 14 functions as the fifth unit of the letter, distinct from both the preceding (vv. 11-13) and succeeding (vv. 15-17) units.

That the words 'without' (χωρὶς), 'consent' (γνώμη), 'nothing' (οὐδὲν), 'I resolved' (ἠθέλησα), 'compulsion' (ἀνάγκην), and 'benevolence' (ἐκούσιον) occur only in v. 14 further confirms this unit's distinctiveness. The repetition of the full form of the preposition 'under' (κατὰ), which occurs only in this unit (cf. the short form in v. 2: 'at your house' [τῇ κατ' οἴκόν]), contributes to both the unity and uniqueness of this fifth unit.

6. *Philemon's Beloved Brother* (vv. 15-17)

A pair of inclusions formed by second person singular verbs for 'have' with Philemon as subject and by the pronoun 'him' referring to Onesimus defines the unity of the sixth unit (vv. 15-17). This unit begins with Paul telling Philemon that 'him (αὐτὸν) you might have back (ἀπέχῃς) forever' (v. 15) and concludes with Paul's plea that 'if then you have (ἔχεις) me as a partner, welcome him (αὐτὸν) as me' (v. 17). Repetitions of the pronoun referring to Paul add to this unit's cohesiveness: 'especially to me (ἐμοί)' (v. 16); 'if then you have me (με)' (v. 17); and 'as me (ἐμέ)' (v. 17). As already noted, the return to the focus on Onesimus, 'no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother' (v. 16), in this sixth unit indicates its distinctiveness from the fifth unit focused on Philemon (v. 14).

7. *Philemon's Debt to Paul* (vv. 18-19)

An inclusion constituted by forms of the verb 'owes', which occur only in this unit, and by the pronoun referring to Philemon defines both the unity and distinctiveness of the seventh unit (vv. 18-19). The unit begins with Paul addressing Philemon about Onesimus, 'And if he has wronged *you* (σε) in any way or *owes* (ὀφείλει) you anything' (v. 18), and concludes as Paul tells Philemon, 'but may I not tell *you* (σοι) that you more than *owe* (προσopheίλεις) me your very self' (v. 19).

Repetitions of the pronoun referring to Paul add to this unit's cohesiveness: 'charge it *to me* (ἐμοὶ)' (v. 18); '*I* (ἐγὼ), Paul, am writing in *my own* (ἐμῇ) hand, *I* (ἐγὼ) will repay' (v. 19); 'you more than owe *me* (μοι) your very self' (v. 19).

8. *What Philemon Will Do* (vv. 20-22)

An inclusion formed by first person singular verbs with Paul as the subject and recipient of a future benefit or grace, verbs which occur only in this unit, define the unity and uniqueness of the eighth unit (vv. 20-22). The unit begins with Paul addressing Philemon, 'Yes, brother, *may I benefit* (ὀναίμην) from you' (v. 20), and concludes with Paul addressing the entire assembly, '*I will be granted* (χαρισθήσομαι) to you' (v. 22).

Repetitions of the pronouns referring respectively to Paul, Philemon, and the assembly contribute to the unity of this unit: 'May *I* (ἐγὼ) benefit from *you* (σου)...refresh *my* (μου) heart' (v. 20); 'confident of *your* (σου) obedience I am writing *to you* (σοι)' (v. 21); 'prepare *for me* (μοι)...through *your* (ὁμῶν) prayers I will be granted *to you* (ὁμῖν)' (v. 22). That this unit contains repeated occurrences of the second person plural pronoun (v. 22) distinguishes it from both the preceding (vv. 18-19) and succeeding (vv. 23-25) units. This form of the pronoun occurs only once in the succeeding ninth unit (v. 25) and not at all in the preceding seventh unit.

9. *Closing Greetings* (vv. 23-25)

An inclusion consisting of an inverted repetition of the name Jesus Christ defines the ninth unit (vv. 23-25). The unit begins with a reference to Epaphras as 'my fellow captive in *Christ Jesus*' (v. 23) and concludes with a reference to 'the grace of the Lord *Jesus Christ*' (v. 25). Unique occurrences of the words 'greet's'

(Ἀσπάζεται), ‘Epaphras’, ‘fellow captive’ (συναϊχμάλωτός) (v. 23), ‘Mark’, ‘Aristarchus’, ‘Demas’, ‘Luke’ (v. 24), and ‘spirit’ (πνεύματος) (v. 25) demonstrate this unit’s distinctiveness within the letter.

II. The Parallels and Pivot of the Chiastic Structure

A. Paul begins with a framework of imprisonment and partnership under grace (vv. 1-3).

A'. Paul closes with a framework of imprisonment and partnership under grace (vv. 23-25).

Verbal repetitions of significant words in the same sequence indicate the parallelism between the opening A unit (vv. 1-3) and the closing A' unit (vv. 23-25) in the chiasm. ‘Epaphras, my fellow captive in *Christ Jesus*’ (v. 23) parallels ‘Paul a prisoner of *Christ Jesus*’ (v. 1). The greeting from Paul’s ‘fellow workers (συνεργοί)’ (v. 24) corresponds to Paul’s address to Philemon as ‘our beloved and fellow worker (συνεργῶ)’ (v. 1). ‘The grace (χάρις) of the *Lord Jesus Christ* be with your (ὑμῶν) spirit’ (v. 25) parallels ‘grace (χάρις) to you (ὑμῖν) and peace from God our Father and the *Lord Jesus Christ*’ (v. 3). That the nouns ‘fellow worker(s)’, ‘grace’, and the full designation ‘Lord Jesus Christ’ occur only in these two units enhances the parallelism.

The sequence of repeated nouns is the same in both units: Christ Jesus – fellow worker(s) – grace – Lord Jesus Christ. Only the pronouns do not occur in the same position in the sequence. ‘To you’ (ὑμῖν) occurs before ‘Lord Jesus Christ’ in the opening greeting (v. 3) and ‘your’ (ὑμῶν) occurs as the last word of the letter after ‘Lord Jesus Christ’ in the closing greeting (v. 25). This straight parallelism stands in contrast to the inverted parallelism that, as we will see, characterizes the other chiastically paired units. This distinguishes the opening (vv. 1-3) and closing (vv. 23-25) units of the chiasm as constituting a framework of imprisonment and partnership under grace for the entire letter. Within this framework the argument of the letter is conducted in the other, inversely parallel units of the chiasm.

B. From love Philemon’s partnership can result in doing good for Christ (vv. 4-7).

B'. From obedience Philemon will do good in benefiting Paul with Onesimus (vv. 20-22).

The B (vv. 4-7) and B' (vv. 20-22) units of the chiasm are inversely parallel. The B unit ends in v. 7 with Paul's address to Philemon as 'brother' (ἀδελφέ); and the B' unit begins in v. 20 with Paul's address to Philemon, 'yes, brother' (νοὶ ἀδελφέ). 'Refresh (ἀνάπαυσόν) my heart (τὰ σπλάγχνα) in Christ' (v. 20) inversely parallels 'the hearts (τὰ σπλάγχνα) of the holy ones have been refreshed (ἀναπέπνυται) through you' (v. 7). The conclusion of the B' unit, 'for I am hoping that through your prayers (προσευχῶν) I will be granted (χαρισθῆσομαι) to you' (v. 22), inversely parallels the introduction of the B unit, 'I thank (Εὐχαριστῶ) my God every time I make mention of you in my prayers (προσευχῶν)' (v. 4).

There are further correspondences between the B and B' units: 'in the Lord' (v. 20) – 'toward the Lord' (v. 5); 'in Christ' (v. 20) – 'for Christ' (v. 6); a ὅτι clause in v. 22 and v. 7; 'through (διὰ) your prayers' (v. 22) – 'through (διὰ) you' (v. 7). That the vocative case of 'brother', the noun 'prayers', and the verbs 'refresh' and 'I thank/I will be granted' occur only in the B and B' units enhances their chiastic parallelism.

C. Paul appeals to Philemon for Onesimus (vv. 8-10).

C'. Paul wants Philemon to charge him for any debt of Onesimus (vv. 18-19).

The C (vv. 8-10) and C' (vv. 18-19) units continue the inverse parallels of the chiasm. 'If he has wronged you (σε) in any way' at the beginning of the C' unit (v. 18) parallels 'I appeal to you (σε)' at the end of the C unit (v. 10). And 'charge it to me (ἐμοὶ)' at the beginning of the C' unit (v. 18) parallels 'for my (ἐμοῦ) child' at the end of the C unit (v. 10). The name 'Paul' in the middle of the C' unit (v. 19) corresponds to the name 'Paul' in the middle of the C unit (v. 9). 'But may I not tell you (σοι)' at the end of the C' unit (v. 19) parallels 'to command what is proper to you (σοι)' at the beginning of the C unit (v. 8).

Each of these units contains a repetition of significant verbs that occur only within these respective units: 'I appeal' (παρακαλῶ in vv. 9-10) in the C unit and 'owes' (ὀφείλει in v. 18; προσοφείλει in v. 19) in the C' unit. That, except for the first word in the letter, the name 'Paul' occurs only in these units enhances their chiastic parallelism.

D. Paul wanted to keep Onesimus, his heart, to serve on behalf of Philemon (vv. 11-13).

D'. Paul wants Philemon to welcome Onesimus as a beloved brother and partner (vv. 15-17).

The D (vv. 11-13) and D' (vv. 15-17) units continue the parallelism of the chiasmic structure, but with a notable deviation in the inverse pattern. The D unit ends with a ἵνα clause in v. 13 and the D' unit contains a ἵνα clause in its first verse (v. 15). 'Have him back (ἀπέχης) forever' in the first verse of the D' unit (v. 15) inversely and antithetically parallels 'whom I wanted to keep (κατέχειν) for myself' in the last verse of the D unit (v. 13).

But 'a beloved brother, especially to me (ἐμοί), but how much more to you (σοὶ)' in the middle of the D' unit (v. 16) inversely parallels 'useful to you (σοὶ) and to me (ἐμοί)' in the first verse of the D unit (v. 11), as well as 'he might serve on your (σου) behalf me (μοι)' in the last verse of the D unit (v. 13). 'Welcome him (προσλαβοῦ) as me (ἐμέ)' in the last verse of the D' unit (v. 17) corresponds to 'whom I am sending back to you, him (αὐτόν), that is my (ἐμὸν) heart' in the middle of the D unit (v. 12). That the pronoun 'him' referring to Onesimus and the verbs 'keep' and 'have back' occur only in these units enhances their chiasmic parallelism.

E. The good that Philemon can do in regard to Onesimus must be from benevolence (v. 14).

The E (v. 14) unit represents the central and pivotal point of the chiasmic structure. Although as a unit it is unparalleled, it does contain within it some key parallels with the other units. Like the D (v. 13) and D' (v. 15) units the E unit contains a ἵνα clause. Like the C (v. 8 and v. 10) and the C' (v. 18 and v. 19) units the E unit contains occurrences of the pronoun referring to Philemon: 'your (σῆς) consent' and 'your (σου) good' (v. 14).

But most noteworthy are the E unit's parallels with the B and B' units. 'So that your *good* (ἀγαθόν) might not be as under compulsion but rather under benevolence' in the second half of the E unit parallels 'all the *good* (ἀγαθοῦ) that is among us for Christ' in the middle of the B unit (v. 6). And 'but without your consent I resolved *to do* (ποιήσαι) nothing' in the first half of the E unit parallels 'knowing that *you will do* (ποιήσεις) even more than I say' in the middle of the B' unit (v. 21). That these are the only occurrences of the noun 'good' and the verb 'do' in the letter enhances the significance of these parallels.

III. Listening to the Chiastic Structure of the Letter

We will now focus on how the authorial or implied audience responds as it hears the chiastic sequence of the letter⁽¹⁰⁾. The authorial or implied audience refers to the audience Paul envisions in composing the letter. Paul assumes this audience possesses the knowledge necessary to actualize the letter's meaning. Although we cannot presume that the audience of the letter to Philemon has heard the other Pauline letters or the Acts of the Apostles, we can use them to glean much of the knowledge about Paul's missionary work that he presupposes on the part of his implied audience⁽¹¹⁾.

A. Paul opens with a framework of imprisonment and partnership under grace (vv. 1-3).

Paul's opening designation of himself as 'a prisoner of Christ Jesus' (v. 1) has a threefold meaning for the audience: (1) that Paul is located in a prison *because* of his preaching of the gospel about Christ Jesus⁽¹²⁾; (2) that Paul's being in prison is *for the sake of* preaching the gospel about Christ Jesus — that is, that he can advance the gospel despite being in prison (cf. Phil 1,12-18); (3) that Paul is a 'prisoner' of Christ Jesus in a metaphorical sense which transcends his literal imprisonment, as it expresses both Christ's total, authoritative claim upon Paul for the preaching of the gospel and Paul's total dedication to that claim⁽¹³⁾. As a 'prisoner' Paul addresses the audience as one who has special authority from and for the preaching of the gospel about Christ Jesus.

⁽¹⁰⁾ On the oral nature of Paul's letters, which would have been publicly read and listened to by the audience probably in a liturgical setting, see HARVEY, *Listening*, 1-59.

⁽¹¹⁾ For more on the concept of the authorial or implied audience, see W. CARTER — J.P. HEIL, *Matthew's Parables*. Audience-Oriented Perspectives (CBQMS 30; Washington 1998) 9-14; J.P. HEIL, *The Meal Scenes in Luke-Acts*. An Audience-Oriented Approach (SBLMS 52; Atlanta 1999) 2-3.

⁽¹²⁾ Of the three usually suggested possibilities — Caesarea, Rome, or Ephesus — for Paul's imprisonment, Ephesus seems the most probable; see DUNN, *Philemon*, 307-308, for the arguments for Rome or Ephesus. For a recent argument in favor of the Caesarean hypothesis, see E.E. ELLIS, *The Making of the New Testament Documents* (Biblical Interpretation Series 39; Leiden 1999) 266-275.

⁽¹³⁾ C.S. WANSINK, *Chained in Christ*. The Experience and Rhetoric of Paul's Imprisonments (JSNTSS 130; Sheffield 1996) 147-157. F. STAUDINGER, "δεσμός", *EDNT* I, 290: '...the gen.[itive] of source, quality, and possession expresses the apostle's inner relationship to Christ together with its missionary effect'.

Timothy 'the brother' (v. 1) is a co-sender together with Paul of the letter. The audience presumably knows that Timothy is a preeminent fellow worker of Paul in the preaching of the gospel, and thus a figurative rather than literal brother⁽¹⁴⁾. The simple designation, 'the' (not 'my', 'your', or 'our') brother, has the rhetorical effect of connoting Timothy's independence as a fraternal fellow worker, who shares with both Paul and the audience a responsibility for furthering the gospel⁽¹⁵⁾. Although Paul is the primary author, the addition of Timothy as a co-sender adds his authority, while indicating that this is not a purely private and personal but rather a public and communal letter concerning the advancement of the gospel.

That Philemon is addressed first and with a double designation as both 'our beloved one and fellow worker' (v. 1) indicates that he is the primary recipient of the letter⁽¹⁶⁾. As one 'beloved' by both Paul and Timothy and as their 'fellow worker' ⁽¹⁷⁾, Philemon is addressed as one who shares an independent but mutual responsibility for promoting the gospel⁽¹⁸⁾.

⁽¹⁴⁾ On Timothy as Paul's fellow worker, see W.-H. OLLROG, *Paulus und seine Mitarbeiter: Untersuchungen zu Theorie und Praxis der paulinischen Mission* (WMANT 50; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1979) 20-23. In a variant but preferred reading of 1 Thess 3,2 Paul refers to Timothy as 'our brother and fellow worker for God in the gospel of Christ'. For the text-critical discussion, see B.M. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York 1971) 631.

⁽¹⁵⁾ On 'brother' in the sense of a fraternal fellow worker of Paul, see J. BEUTLER, "ἀδελφός", *EDNT* I, 30; OLLROG, *Mitarbeiter*, 78. The fellow workers Paul names 'brother' include: Sosthenes (1 Cor 1,1), Apollo (1 Cor 16,12), Titus (2 Cor 2,13), Epaphroditus (Phil 2,25), Timothy (2 Cor 1,1; Phlm 1; Col 1,1). On the independence of Paul's fellow workers, see OLLROG, *Mitarbeiter*, 182-189.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Archippus, then, addressed third and with a single designation, 'our fellow soldier' (v. 2), is not the primary recipient, *contra* J. KNOX, *Philemon Among the Letters of Paul. A New View of Its Place and Importance* (New York 1959) 60-70; S.C. WINTER, "Paul's Letter to Philemon", *NTS* 33 (1987) 1-2.

⁽¹⁷⁾ O. WISCHMEYER, "Das Adjektiv ΑΓΑΠΗΤΟΣ in den paulinischen Briefen: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Miszelle", *NTS* 32 (1986) 478.

⁽¹⁸⁾ For the significance of a 'fellow worker' of Paul, see W.A. MEEKS, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven 1983) 133-134; OLLROG, *Mitarbeiter*, 63-72; ID., "συνεργός", *EDNT* III, 304: '[A] person who is active with and like Paul as a representative of God in the mission "work" of proclamation. The συνεργός is thus Paul's fellow worker, fellow missionary, mission colleague: "In the service of God we are fellow workers" (1 Cor 3:9) — not synergistically "God's fellow workers" ... The συνεργός is also not Paul's "helper", "companion", or "servant", as the word has repeatedly been mistranslated'.

Paul designates the next addressee of the letter, Apphia (v. 2), as 'the sister', that is, like Timothy, 'the brother' (v. 1), another fellow worker of Paul in the mission of the gospel⁽¹⁹⁾. Paul designates the next addressee, Archippus (v. 2), as our 'fellow soldier', a figurative term for a fellow worker with the loyalty of a soldier in the metaphorical 'warfare' involved in the work of advancing the gospel⁽²⁰⁾. Finally Paul addresses the letter to 'the assembly at your house' (v. 2), a gathering of Christians as a worshipping congregation at Philemon's house, thus, a 'house church'⁽²¹⁾.

This establishes the rhetorical situation of the letter. As a prisoner in the work of promoting the gospel of Christ Jesus, Paul, together with a co-sender, his fraternal fellow worker Timothy, is addressing an implied audience composed not only of the beloved fellow worker Philemon, the primary addressee (v. 1), but also two other fellow workers, Apphia and Archippus, as well as the assembly of Christians gathered at the house of Philemon for the public reading of the letter (v. 2). Thus, the letter is a communal rather than private communication between partners with a mutual concern and responsibility for advancing the gospel.

Paul directs the opening greeting of grace and peace 'to you' (the plural, ὑμῖν) — not just to Philemon but also to the other fellow workers and the assembly gathered at his house (v. 3). Rhetorically the greeting unites the senders and recipients of the letter under the grace and peace they have all freely and graciously received from God, their common ('our') Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. It is because of the grace and peace that comes from the 'Lord Jesus Christ' (v. 3) that Paul is a prisoner of 'Christ Jesus' (v. 1) and a partner with Philemon and his other fellow workers, who share his concern and responsibility for the gospel. The A (vv. 1-3) unit thus

⁽¹⁹⁾ On 'sister' as a designation for a fellow worker of Paul, see OLLROG, *Mitarbeiter*, 77-78; J. BEUTLER, "ἀδελφή", *EDNT* I, 30.

⁽²⁰⁾ On 'fellow soldier' as a metaphorical designation for a fellow worker or missionary colleague of Paul, see OLLROG, *Mitarbeiter*, 77; "συστρατιώτης", *EDNT* 3.314; WANSINK, *Chained in Christ*, 164-170; DUNN, *Philemon*, 312-313; D.J. WILLIAMS, *Paul's Metaphors. Their Context and Character* (Peabody 1999) 243, n. 141. In Phil 2,25 Paul designates Epaphroditus as 'my brother' (ἀδελφόν; cf. Phlm 1) and fellow worker (συνεργόν; cf. Phlm 1) and fellow soldier (συστρατιώτην; cf. Phlm 2).

⁽²¹⁾ J. ROLOFF, "ἐκκλησία", *EDNT* 1.413; C. OSIEK – D.L. BALCH, *Families in the New Testament World. Households and House Churches* (Louisville 1997) 33, 97.

sets for the entire letter a tone of gratitude for the God-given grace and peace the senders and recipients share with all who believe in and work to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ.

B. From love Philemon's partnership can result in doing good for Christ (vv. 4-7).

The transition from the A to the B units is by way of a catch-word connection. In response to the grace (χάρις) that comes from God (θεοῦ) (v. 3) Paul thanks (εὐχαριστῶ) his God (θεῶ) every time he makes mention of Philemon in his prayers (v. 4)⁽²²⁾. Paul thanks God for Philemon's 'love and faith', both of which are directed to both 'the Lord Jesus', in response to the grace and peace that come from 'the Lord Jesus Christ' (v. 3), and to 'all the holy ones' (v. 5)⁽²³⁾. Included among 'all the holy ones', that is, all believers, is the audience, the assembly at Philemon's house (together with Apphia and Archippus, v. 2), listening to the letter⁽²⁴⁾. Paul has drawn them, as beneficiaries of Philemon's love and faith, into his prayers of thanksgiving for Philemon. They stand before Philemon as public witnesses who can identify with and verify what Paul is saying about Philemon.

How Philemon's faith (πίστιν) can be directed to all the holy ones (v. 5) is indicated by the purpose of Paul's prayer, namely, that the partnership of Philemon's faith (πίστεώς) might become effective in the recognition (by all the holy ones) of all the good that is among 'us' (Paul and Philemon) for (promoting the gospel about) Christ (v. 6)⁽²⁵⁾. The faith (and love) that Philemon has 'for all the holy ones' (v. 5) can effect a public recognition of all the good that is among

⁽²²⁾ That χάρις has a connotation of gratitude or thanks enhances its catch-word connection with εὐχαριστῶ; see K. BERGER, "χάρις", *EDNT* III, 459. On the significance of 'grace' for Paul, see J.D.G. DUNN, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids 1998) 319-323.

⁽²³⁾ DUNN, *Philemon*, 317. The singular relative pronoun ἧν in v. 5 treats love and faith as a singular combination directed to both the Lord Jesus and all the holy ones; see P. STUHLMACHER, *Der Brief an Philemon* (EKK; Zürich 1975) 32.

⁽²⁴⁾ On 'holy ones' as a designation for Christian believers, see H. BALZ, "ἅγιος", *EDNT* I, 19.

⁽²⁵⁾ A subtle word play between Philemon as 'our fellow worker (συνεργῶ)' (v. 1) and the 'effectiveness of your (σου ἐνεργής) faith' (v. 6) underlines how κοινωνία here refers to the partnership between Paul and Philemon as fellow workers in the advancement of the gospel. F. HAUCK, "κοινός", *TDNT* III, 798: 'κοινωνία is used esp. of a close life partnership'. J. HAINZ, "κοινωνία", *EDNT* II, 304: '...the word group represented by κοινωνία can be seen as the key to the total understanding of the letter to Philemon; i.e., the letter is a concrete demonstration of what Paul understands by κοινωνία'.

Paul and Philemon 'for Christ' (v. 6). And all the good that Paul and Philemon can do 'for' (εἰς) Christ (v. 6) is also 'for' (εἰς) all the holy ones (v. 5), including the audience listening to the letter at Philemon's house⁽²⁶⁾.

Paul is confident that in their partnership as fellow workers he and Philemon can do something good for Christ and for the holy ones (vv. 5-6), 'for' (γάρ) Paul has had much joy and encouragement in Philemon's love (cf. v. 5), because the hearts of the holy ones have already been and still are refreshed (ἀναπέπαινανται, perfect tense) through Philemon (v. 7)⁽²⁷⁾. Paul employs the emotional word 'hearts' (σπλάγχνα) and concludes this thanksgiving unit by addressing Philemon affectionately and warmly as 'brother' (ἀδελφέ), further associating him with Paul's co-sender and preeminent fellow worker Timothy, 'the brother' (v. 1)⁽²⁸⁾. In this B (vv. 4-7) unit Paul has thus awakened in his audience not only a sense of gratitude for all the good that Philemon has already done in refreshing their hearts as holy ones (v. 7), but also an expectation of a further good that Paul and Philemon together as fraternal partners and fellow workers can do for all the holy ones and for Christ (vv. 5-6).

C. Paul appeals to Philemon for Onesimus (vv. 8-10).

Alliterative catch-words link the C to the B unit. The Paul who had (ἔσχον) much (πολλήν) joy and encouragement (παράκλησιν) in (ἐπὶ) your (σου) love (v. 7) now has (ἔχων) much (πολλήν) boldness (παρρησίαν) in Christ to command (ἐπιτάσσειν) to you (σοι) what is proper (v. 8). Paul's relationship to Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ, v. 8), which he shares with Philemon and the rest of the audience, who are among the holy ones (vv. 5, 7), gives him the boldness to command Philemon to do what is proper, that is, the good that Philemon can do for Christ (εἰς Χριστόν, v. 6)⁽²⁹⁾.

⁽²⁶⁾ That εἰς occurs only in vv. 5-6 within the entire letter enhances the significance of this parallelism.

⁽²⁷⁾ P. FIEDLER, "ἀναπαύω", *EDNT* I, 87: 'In Paul the word has to do with inner rest (through joy, comfort, etc.)'. See also 1 Cor 16,18; 2 Cor 7,13.

⁽²⁸⁾ For the significance of σπλάγχνα, see N. WALTER, "σπλάγχνον", *EDNT* III, 265-266; BAGD, 763. DUNN, *Philemon*, 320-321: 'The compliment to Philemon becomes even more fulsome, strengthened still further by the personal warmth of the final ἀδελφέ ... Whatever the precise circumstances, the more emotional note implicit in the use of σπλάγχνα (rather than the much more common καρδιά) should be noted; the emotional bonds between Philemon and 'the saints' were strong'.

⁽²⁹⁾ On the meaning of 'boldness' here, see H. BALZ, "παρρησία", *EDNT*

Nevertheless, as an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus, Paul would rather appeal on the basis of love (v. 9). The encouragement (παράκλησιν) that Paul has had in Philemon's love (ἐπὶ τῇ ἀγάπῃ σου) (v. 7) for all the holy ones (v. 5) leads him to appeal (παρακαλῶ) on account of love (διὰ τὴν ἀγάπην, v. 9) — not only Philemon's love for the holy ones (v. 5) but Paul's love for Philemon, 'our beloved' (v. 1)⁽³⁰⁾. That Paul refers to himself both as an 'old man' (πρεσβύτης) and again as a prisoner of Christ Jesus (cf. v. 1) evokes from his audience empathy and respect both for his old age and for his special relationship to Christ as a literal and metaphorical prisoner⁽³¹⁾. That Paul is both an old man and a prisoner of Christ Jesus intensifies the motivation for Philemon to extend to Paul the same love he demonstrated to the holy ones.

Having stated his preference to appeal (παρακαλῶ, v. 9) to rather than to command Philemon (v. 8), Paul makes his appeal: 'I appeal (παρακαλῶ) to you for my child, whom I have begotten in prison, Onesimus' (v. 10)⁽³²⁾. That Paul appeals 'for' (περὶ), in the sense of

III, 45-47; P.T. O'BRIEN, *Colossians, Philemon* (WBC 44; Waco 1982) 287-288. DUNN, *Philemon*, 325: '...the appeal here is not to Paul's apostolic authority vis-à-vis Philemon...As one equally "in Christ", Philemon could be expected to acknowledge that an "in Christ" obligation transcended all others'.

⁽³⁰⁾ For the significance of παρακαλῶ in Pauline letters, see J. THOMAS, "παρακαλεῶ", *EDNT* III, 26-27; C. J. BJERKELUND, *Parakalō*. Form, Funktion und Sinn der parakalō-Sätze in den paulinischen Briefen (BTN 1; Oslo 1967). DUNN, *Philemon*, 326: '...its range of nuance strikes the right balance between obligation demanded and favor requested: "urge, exhort, appeal to, request, implore"'.

⁽³¹⁾ For the argument that πρεσβύτης means 'ambassador' here, see N.R. PETERSEN, *Rediscovering Paul*. Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World (Philadelphia 1985) 125-128. More convincing, however, is R.F. HOCK, "A Support for His Old Age: Paul's Plea on Behalf of Onesimus", *The Social World of the First Christians*. Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks (eds. L.M. WHITE – O. L. Yarbrough) (Minneapolis 1995) 67-81. See also J.N. BIRDSALL, "Πρεσβύτης in Philemon 9: A Study in Conjectural Emendation", *NTS* 39 (1993) 625-630; R. RIESNER, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology* (Grand Rapids 1998) 214. DUNN, *Philemon*, 327: '...since age usually brought with it the wisdom of experience, the appeal is for the respect that a younger member of the same family or circle should pay to the elder (cf. Lev. 19:32; Sir. 8:6; hence the evolution of the near synonym, πρεσβύτερος, from 'older person' to synagogue or church leader, 'elder')'.

⁽³²⁾ CHURCH, "Philemon", 26: 'By doubling the verb παρακαλῶ, Paul pulls on Philemon's heart-strings not once, but twice. In the exordium, Paul commended Philemon for the love he had shown toward all the saints. Now it is for love's sake, and his child, whom he had begotten in prison, that Paul appeals, offering Philemon the opportunity to demonstrate that love'.

‘on behalf of’⁽³³⁾, ‘my (ἐμοῦ, possessive adjective in the emphatic position) child’⁽³⁴⁾, that is, the child of Paul the old man and prisoner (v. 9), evokes Philemon’s love not only for Paul, who loves Philemon (v. 1), but for Onesimus, who, as Paul’s ‘child’, has now become one of the holy ones (cf. v. 5)⁽³⁵⁾. That Paul has figuratively and spiritually ‘begotten’ (ἐγέννησα), that is, converted Onesimus into a holy one while ‘in prison’⁽³⁶⁾, not only demonstrates to his ‘fellow worker’ Philemon how Paul is doing the work of advancing the gospel even as a prisoner of Christ Jesus (vv. 1, 9), but summons Philemon to share in Paul’s special love for his child begotten by Paul as an old man in prison⁽³⁷⁾. Only after referring to him as ‘my own child’ begotten in prison does Paul climactically announce the name of Onesimus⁽³⁸⁾.

D. Paul wanted to keep Onesimus, his heart, to serve on behalf of Philemon (vv. 11-13).

The pronouns referring to Philemon and Paul serve as catch-words connecting the D to the C unit: ‘I appeal to you (σε) for my (ἐμοῦ) child’ (v. 10)... ‘who was once to you (σοι) useless but now is indeed to you (σοι) and to me (ἐμοι) useful’ (v. 11). Having named Onesimus, a frequently-attested name for slaves meaning ‘the useful one’, Paul employs a clever word play on the name to further persuade Philemon

⁽³³⁾ BJERKELUND, *Parakalô*, 120-121; O’BRIEN, *Philemon*, 290.

⁽³⁴⁾ Compare the emphatic construction with the possessive adjective before the noun, ‘For my child’ (περὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ τέκνου) in v. 10 with the more usual, non-emphatic construction with the possessive pronoun after the noun in v. 23, ‘my fellow captive’ (ὁ συναιχμαλώτός μου).

⁽³⁵⁾ On ‘child’ as a term for a Christian or holy one in Paul, see G. Schneider, “τέκνον”, *EDNT* III, 341; BAGD, 808; O’BRIEN, *Philemon*, 290-291; DUNN, *Philemon*, 328.

⁽³⁶⁾ A. KRETZER, “γέννάω”, *EDNT* I, 243; BAGD, 155; DUNN, *Philemon*, 328.

⁽³⁷⁾ O’BRIEN, *Philemon*, 291: ‘That Onesimus ... had been converted by Paul during the latter’s imprisonment (which was no doubt a frustrating time) probably made him feel a special affection for Onesimus’. On the intimacy of the Pauline parent-child relationship here, see O.L. YARBROUGH, “Parents and Children in the Letters of Paul”, *The Social World of the First Christians. Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks* (eds. L.M. WHITE – O.L. Yarbrough) (Minneapolis 1995) 133.

⁽³⁸⁾ O’BRIEN, *Philemon*, 290: ‘The sentence is carefully constructed, for Onesimus’ name stands last...with delicate tact Paul first establishes the central fact that Onesimus has become a Christian, converted during Paul’s imprisonment’.

to extend his love to both Paul and his 'child' Onesimus⁽³⁹⁾. That Onesimus ('useful') was once 'useless' (ἄχρηστον) to Philemon acknowledges that as a slave he was useless to Philemon while he was away from his household⁽⁴⁰⁾. But, on a deeper level, since ἄχρηστον sounds like α-Χριστόν ('without Christ'), Onesimus was 'useless' to Philemon while he was 'without Christ', that is, a non-Christian. Now, however, Onesimus is 'useful' (εὐχρηστον) to both Philemon and Paul since he has become Paul's 'child', that is, 'with Christ' (εὐ-Χριστόν), a good Christian⁽⁴¹⁾. Through this shrewd word play Paul proposes to his audience that the formerly non-Christian, 'useless' Onesimus has now become a Christian 'useful' to both Philemon and Paul in their common work of advancing the gospel⁽⁴²⁾.

The sequence of emphatic pronouns referring to Paul in his relationship to Onesimus, the focus of this D unit, continues: 'whom I am sending back to you, him, that is *my* (ἐμὸν) heart' (v. 12). This intensifies Paul's warmly close and affectionate relationship to Onesimus. Not only is Onesimus '*my* (ἐμοῦ) child' (v. 10), who is 'to *me* (ἐμοὶ) useful' (v. 11), but, indeed, he is '*my* (ἐμὸν) heart' (v. 12). Paul is appealing to the Philemon whose love touched the 'hearts' (σπλάγχνα) of the holy ones (v. 7) to extend that love (cf. v. 5) to Onesimus, who as Paul's child has now become a holy one, indeed, Paul's very 'heart' (σπλάγχνα, v. 12)⁽⁴³⁾.

The D unit concludes with three more occurrences of the pronoun to underline Paul's special relation to Onesimus: 'whom *I* (ἐγὼ) wanted to keep for *myself* (ἐμαυτὸν), so that he might serve on your behalf *me* (μοι) in the imprisonment of the gospel' (v. 13)⁽⁴⁴⁾. Here

⁽³⁹⁾ On the meaning of 'Onesimus', see BAGD, 570; EDNT II, 518.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ DUNN, *Philemon*, 329 n. 22: "Ὀνήσιμος, synonymous with χρηστός, is derived from the verb ὀνίνημι, "profit, benefit, help".

⁽⁴¹⁾ Instead of the simple pronoun μοι, the use of the more emphatic ἐμοὶ ('to me') referring to Paul in v. 11 not only enhances the catch-word connection with ἐμοῦ ('my') in v. 10, but also underlines how, as a Christian, Onesimus is 'useful' to Paul as 'my (ἐμοῦ) child'.

⁽⁴²⁾ On the significance of the word play here, see DUNN, *Philemon*, 329; HÜBNER, *Philemon*, 35.

⁽⁴³⁾ O. MONTEVECCHI, "Viscere di misericordia", *RivB* 43 (1995) 129: 'Paolo...vuole che Filemone consideri lo schiavo come un figlio che lui, Paolo, ha generato in catene, e su questo concetto insiste con un crescendo di intensità'.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ For terminology similar to that in vv. 11-13 about a useful slave in a papyrus text contemporaneous to the letter to Philemon, see P. ARZT, "Brauchbare Sklaven: Ausgewählte Papyrustexte zum Philemonbrief", *Protokolle zur Bibel* 1 (1992) 56-58.

Paul states what he wants from his fellow worker Philemon. Although Paul is sending Onesimus back, he really wants to retain him, so that he can continue to serve Paul as a fellow missionary worker in the 'imprisonment' of the gospel 'on your behalf' (ὕπὲρ σοῦ), that is, in place of, as a representative substitute for, Philemon himself⁽⁴⁵⁾.

Paul here is not rebuking Philemon for failing to serve Paul as his fellow worker for the gospel⁽⁴⁶⁾. The purpose clause, 'so that (ἵνα) he might serve on your behalf me in the imprisonment of the gospel' (v. 13), further specifies the purpose clause that expresses the content of Paul's prayer, 'that (ὅπως) the partnership of your faith might become effective in the recognition of all the good that is among us for Christ' (v. 6). Paul is offering Philemon the opportunity for them as partners in faith to do a further good for Christ by allowing Onesimus to serve Paul as Philemon's representative fellow worker. That Onesimus might serve on 'your' (σοῦ) behalf 'me' (μοι) in the imprisonment of the gospel (v. 13) elaborates how Onesimus can more precisely be both 'to you' (σοὶ) and 'to me' (ἐμοὶ) 'useful' (v. 11).

E. The good that Philemon can do in regard to Onesimus must be from benevolence (v. 14).

The pronouns referring to Philemon and the conjunction ἵνα form catch-words linking the E to the D unit: 'so that (ἵνα) he might serve on your (σοῦ) behalf' (v. 13)... 'but without your (σῆς) consent I resolved to do nothing, so that (ἵνα) your (σου) good might not be as under compulsion but rather under benevolence' (v. 14). The purpose clause, 'so that (ἵνα) your good (ἀγαθόν)', that is, 'so that (ἵνα) Onesimus might on behalf of Philemon serve Paul in the imprisonment of the gospel (v. 13), recalls and refines the purpose clause expressing Paul's prayer, 'that' (ὅπως) the partnership of Paul and Philemon might become effective in the recognition of all the 'good' (ἀγαθοῦ) they can do for Christ (v. 6). In other words, the 'good' that Philemon can do (v. 14) is not general but very specific;

⁽⁴⁵⁾ On 'serve' (διακονῆ) in v. 13 as meaning not so much personal service to Paul in prison but service as a fellow missionary worker in the metaphorical 'imprisonment' of the gospel, and on 'your behalf' (ὕπὲρ σοῦ) as meaning 'in place of' or 'representative of' Philemon, see OLLROG, *Mitarbeiter*, 102-103; O'BRIEN, *Philemon*, 293-294; HÜBNER, *Philemon*, 36.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ DUNN, *Philemon*, 331.

it consists in allowing Onesimus to serve Paul as Philemon's representative in the work of advancing the gospel (v. 13)⁽⁴⁷⁾.

Having expressed what he wants from Philemon, namely, for Onesimus to serve Paul in the work of the gospel (v. 13), Paul begins to explain why he wants it, namely, because it would be a good deed of Philemon's love in response to the grace of God (v. 14). Paul respectfully resolved to do nothing without the consent of his partner and fellow worker Philemon, so that Philemon's good might not be 'as under compulsion' (v. 14), which would be the case if Paul had merely retained Onesimus for himself (v. 13) and commanded Philemon to release him for service with Paul (v. 8). Rather, Paul wants Philemon's good to be done 'under benevolence' (v. 14), that is, freely, voluntarily, in accord with his love for the holy ones (vv. 5-7) in response to God's freely given grace (v. 3)⁽⁴⁸⁾.

In referring to all of the previous units, this E unit brings the rhetorical thrust of the first half of the chiasm to a climax: Philemon's good of allowing Onesimus to serve with Paul must be done from benevolence for Onesimus as Paul's very 'heart', so that Onesimus can be useful to both Philemon and Paul (D unit). Philemon's good must not be under the compulsion of Paul's command, but on account of his benevolent love for the old man and prisoner Paul and his 'child' Onesimus (C unit). Philemon's benevolent 'good' is a further 'good' (v. 6) that he as a partner of Paul can do from his faithful love for all the holy ones (B unit). The benevolence of Philemon's good would appropriately accord with the freely given grace of God that has made Philemon a fellow worker of Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus (A unit).

As its central and pivotal point, the E unit (v. 14) not only climaxes the first half of the chiasm but serves as the transition and dominant motivation for the completion of Paul's argument in the

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Although O'BRIEN (*Philemon*, 295) points out how Philemon's 'good' in v. 14 refers to a particular definite act, he misses its relation to v. 13: 'Up to this point nothing is stated explicitly about the nature of this good deed'.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Although κατὰ ἐκούσιον (v. 14) literally means 'freely, voluntarily, of one's own free will', we translate it as 'under benevolence', that is, under 'good (free) will' because of the context which speaks of Philemon's 'good' (vv. 6, 14) as an act of love in response to God's benevolent grace (v. 3). O'BRIEN, *Philemon*, 294: 'The contrast μὴ ὡς κατὰ ἀνάγκην – ἀλλὰ κατὰ ἐκούσιον ('not by compulsion but of your own free will') was a common one, frequently found in the papyri'. See also 1 Pet 5,2 for the same antithesis and E. LOHSE, *Colossians and Philemon* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia 1971) 202.

second half. Now that Paul has subtly but pointedly established what he wants from Philemon and why he wants it, he will clarify and bolster his argument by way of inversely parallel developments of the previous units of the letter.

D'. Paul wants Philemon to welcome Onesimus as a beloved brother and partner (vv. 15-17).

The word 'without' (χωρίς in v. 14; ἐχωρίσθη in v. 15) and the conjunction ἵνα (v. 14 and v. 15) serve as catch-words connecting the D' to the E unit. The purpose clause, 'so that (ἵνα) you might have him (αὐτόν)' — the 'him' (αὐτόν) Paul is sending back to Philemon as 'my heart' (v. 12) — 'back forever' (v. 15) corresponds to the purpose clause in the pivot of the chiasm, 'so that (ἵνα) your good...' (v. 14), and begins the inverse parallelism between the D and D' units, 'so that (ἵνα) he might serve...' (v. 13). Paul suggests that Onesimus was purposefully 'separated' from Philemon by God (divine passive) for awhile, so that he can have him back 'forever' (v. 15), that is, in a new, deeper, and paradoxical sense⁽⁴⁹⁾. Philemon can have Onesimus back forever by benevolently doing the good (v. 14) of allowing him to serve Paul in place of Philemon for the gospel (v. 13). In other words, Philemon paradoxically can 'have back' (ἀπέχης, v. 15) Onesimus 'forever' by giving him to Paul, who wants 'to keep' (κατέχειν, v. 13) him for missionary work.

That Philemon can have Onesimus back forever 'no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother (ἀδελφὸν ἀγαπητόν)' (v. 16), appeals to Philemon to relate to Onesimus in the same way that Paul relates to Philemon, that is, as a beloved (ἀγαπητῷ) fellow worker (v. 1) and brother (ἀδελφέ, v. 7)⁽⁵⁰⁾. As a 'beloved brother',

⁽⁴⁹⁾ O'BRIEN, *Philemon*, 296: 'Paul is already in verse 15 speaking of the new relationship of this master to his slave, a relationship in the Lord Jesus Christ which is "for ever"'.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ For the argument whether or not Onesimus is a runaway slave, see P. LAMPE, "Keine 'Sklavenflucht' des Onesimus", *ZNW* 76 (1985) 135-137; J.G. NORDLING, "Onesimus Fugitivus: A Defense of the Runaway Slave Hypothesis in Philemon", *JSNT* 41 (1991) 97-119; R.E. GLAZE, "Onesimus: Runaway or Emissary?" *The Theological Educator* 54 (1996) 3-11; J.A. HARRILL, "Using the Roman Jurists to Interpret Philemon: A Response to Peter Lampe", *ZNW* 90 (1999) 135-138. For the argument that Onesimus purposefully came to Paul as the friend of his master Philemon, see B.M. RAPSKE, "The Prisoner Paul in the Eyes of Onesimus", *NTS* 37 (1991) 187-203. On the question of the manumission of Onesimus see N.H. TAYLOR, "Onesimus: A Case Study of Slave Conversion in Early Christianity", *Religion and Theology* 3 (1996) 271:

Onesimus is to be treated not only as a Christian but as a fellow worker of Paul, just like Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus (vv. 1-2)⁽⁵¹⁾. That Onesimus is a beloved brother especially 'to me' (ἐμοί), Paul, but even more 'to you' (σοί), Philemon (v. 16), develops, by way of inverse parallelism with the D unit, how Onesimus, by serving on 'your' (σοῦ) behalf 'me' (μοι) in the imprisonment of the gospel (v. 13), is both 'to you' (σοί) and 'to me' (ἐμοί) useful (v. 11). Onesimus is a beloved brother to both Paul and Philemon 'in the flesh', that is, in the world as a fellow worker for the gospel, and 'in the Lord', that is, as a Christian (v. 16).

If Philemon truly considers Paul to be his partner (κοινωνόν; cf. κοινωνία in v. 6), then Paul requests that Philemon welcome 'him' (αὐτόν), the 'him' (αὐτόν) who is 'my' (ἐμὰ) heart (v. 12 in the D unit), as 'me' (ἐμέ), Paul (v. 17)⁽⁵²⁾. In other words, Philemon is to welcome Onesimus as if he were Paul himself, the old man and prisoner of Christ Jesus (vv. 1, 9), Philemon's fraternal partner and fellow worker for the gospel.

C'. Paul wants Philemon to charge him for any debt of Onesimus (vv. 18-19).

The conjunction 'if' (εἰ in v. 17 and v. 18) and the pronoun 'me' (ἐμέ in v. 17; ἐμοί in v. 18) serve as catch-words joining the C' to the D' unit. In accord with their 'partnership' for the gospel Paul employs a commercial or business metaphor⁽⁵³⁾. If Onesimus has

'Onesimus' release from domestic or workshop duties in order to attend Paul and assist in his work would not necessarily have involved his manumission'.

⁽⁵¹⁾ On 'brother' as a designation for a fellow worker of Paul, see OLLROG, *Mitarbeiter*, 77-78. A.D. Callahan misconstrues this when he understands Onesimus to be Philemon's literal sibling; see A.D. CALLAHAN, "Paul's Epistle to Philemon: Toward an Alternative Argumentum", *HTR* 86 (1993) 357-376; ID., "John Chrysostom on Philemon: A Reponse to Margaret M. Mitchell", *HTR* 88 (1995) 149-156; ID., *Embassy of Onesimus*. The Letter of Paul to Philemon (Valley Forge 1997); M.M. MITCHELL, "John Chrysostom on Philemon: A Second Look", *HTR* 88 (1995) 135-148.

⁽⁵²⁾ On κοινωνός as a designation of a fellow worker of Paul in the sense of a partner, friend, or colleague, see OLLROG, *Mitarbeiter*, 77; HAINZ, "κοινωνία", 304. WILLIAMS, *Paul's Metaphors*, 168: 'Paul requests that Onesimus be treated as he would himself, that is, as Philemon's partner'.

⁽⁵³⁾ F. LYALL, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons: Legal Metaphors in the Epistles* (Grand Rapids 1984) 144-145: 'Paul and Philemon as Christians were in partnership, working for a common purpose ... both were devoting themselves to the same "business"'.

wronged 'you' (σε), Philemon, in anyway or 'owes' anything, Philemon is to 'charge' it 'to me' (ἐμοῖ), Paul (v. 18)⁽⁵⁴⁾. Within the inverse parallelism of the chiasm Paul is appealing to Philemon to 'charge' him, because he has already appealed 'to you' (σε) for 'my' (ἐμοῦ) child, whom Paul has begotten in prison, Onesimus (v. 10 in the C unit). As the 'father' of Onesimus, Paul accepts responsibility for the debts of his 'son' (55).

With a triplet of emphatic pronouns Paul underlines his acceptance of the debt of Onesimus: 'I (ἐγὼ), Paul, am writing in *my own* (ἐμῇ) hand, I (ἐγὼ) will repay' (v. 19). But, in view of the chiasmic parallelism with the C unit, this is the 'Paul' (cf. Πῶλος in vv. 9, 19) who, as an old man and prisoner of Christ Jesus, is appealing to Philemon on the basis of love (v. 9). Does Paul's 'business partner' really want to charge this old man and prisoner for the debt of his 'son' Onesimus, Paul's very 'heart' (v. 12) and Philemon's 'beloved brother' (v. 16)?

Paul then deftly reverses the debts of their partnership: 'But may I not tell you that you more than owe me your very self!' (v. 19). Whereas Onesimus may 'owe' (ὀφείλει) a debt to Philemon (v. 18), Philemon 'more than owes' (προσοφείλεις) Paul his very self (v. 19), both as a Christian and as a 'business partner' of the 'prisoner of Christ Jesus' (vv. 1, 9)⁽⁵⁶⁾. Within the chiasmic parallelism 'may I not tell you (σοι)' (v. 19) corresponds to Paul's having much boldness in Christ to command 'you' (σοι) what is proper (v. 8). Rather than command, Paul appeals to Philemon on the basis of love (v. 9) and the good he can do under benevolence (v. 14, the pivot of the chiasm). Since Philemon more than owes Paul his very self, he ought graciously, from love and under benevolence, not only to cancel any debt of Onesimus, but allow his slave to serve Paul as a substitute fellow worker for his 'business partner' Philemon (v. 13) in payment of Philemon's debt to Paul of his very self!

(54) WILLIAMS, *Paul's Metaphors*, 168: 'If Philemon was owed anything because of Onesimus, he should *debit Paul's account*, so to speak, in the partnership books' (his emphasis). See also C.J. MARTIN, "The Rhetorical Function of Commercial Language in Paul's Letter to Philemon (Verse 18)", *Persuasive Artistry*. Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy (ed. D.F. Watson) (JSNTSS 50; Sheffield 1991) 321-337.

(55) WILLIAMS, *Paul's Metaphors*, 60: 'the father was responsible for any debts his son might incur'. See also Yarbrough, "Parents and Children", 133.

(56) The prefix *προς-* intensifies Philemon's indebtedness to Paul; see "*προσοφείλω*", *EDNT* III, 176.

B'. From obedience Philemon will do good in benefiting Paul with Onesimus (vv. 20-22).

The pronouns referring to Paul (ἐγὼ, ἐμῇ, ἐγὼ in v. 19; ἐγὼ in v. 20) and Philemon (σοι in v. 19; σου in v. 20) serve as catch-words linking the B' to the C' unit. Continuing the commercial metaphor, Paul furthers his appeal to his fraternal business partner: 'Yes, brother may I benefit from you in the Lord' (v. 20)⁽⁵⁷⁾. Through a word play Paul can 'benefit' or 'profit' (ὀνοάμην) from his fraternal business partner, who owes Paul his very self (v. 19), if Philemon grants him 'Onesimus' ('Ονήσιμον), which means 'beneficial' or 'profitable'⁽⁵⁸⁾. Within the chiasmic parallelism with the B unit Paul may 'benefit' from Philemon in the Lord (κυρίῳ, v. 20) because of Philemon's love and faith for the Lord (κύριον, v. 5).

Paul's appeal, 'Yes, brother (ἀδελφέ)...refresh (ἀναπαυσόν) my heart (τὰ σπλάγχνα) in Christ' (v. 20) in the B' unit is based on what Paul affirmed in the B unit, 'because the hearts (τὰ σπλάγχνα) of the holy ones have been refreshed (ἀναπέπαινται) through you, brother (ἀδελφέ)' (v. 7). Philemon can refresh Paul's heart (μου τὰ σπλάγχνα, v. 20) by refreshing Onesimus, who is Paul's own heart (τὰ ἐμὰ σπλάγχνα, v. 12). To refresh Paul's heart, then, Philemon must forgive any debt of Onesimus (vv. 18-19), welcome Onesimus as a useful partner and beloved brother (vv. 15-17), and benevolently (v. 14) allow Onesimus to serve Paul on Philemon's behalf in the work of advancing the gospel (v. 13). Within the chiasmic parallelism Philemon may refresh Paul's heart in Christ (Χριστῷ, v. 20) because of all the good there is among us for Christ (Χριστόν, v. 6).

In writing to Philemon Paul is confident in the B' unit of 'your obedience' (τῇ ὑπακοῇ σου, v. 21), that is, Philemon's obedience to Paul's appeal to his love for Paul and Onesimus (vv. 9, 16), because Paul in the B unit expressed his joy and encouragement in 'your love' (τῇ ἀγάπῃ σου, v. 7) for all the holy ones. Paul knows that Philemon will do 'even more than I say (λέγω)' (v. 21), that is, even more than what Paul 'says' (λέγω) in telling Philemon that he owes him his very self (v. 19), namely, what Paul is implying — that Philemon give him Onesimus as a substitute payment for himself.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ O'BRIEN, *Philemon*, 301: 'The particle ναὶ ("yes", "indeed", "certainly"), which can denote affirmation, agreement or emphasis, here strengthens Paul's appeal'.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ See the reference to DUNN, *Philemon*, 329 n. 22 in n. 40.

Paul knows that 'you will do' (ποιήσεις, v. 21) even more than Paul says in telling Philemon to welcome Onesimus as Paul himself (v. 17), by doing what Paul himself wants 'to do' (ποιήσαι, v. 14) with Philemon's consent, as stated in the center and pivot of the chiasm, namely, to allow Onesimus to serve Paul in place of Philemon for the gospel (v. 13).

That Philemon is at the same time to prepare a guest room for Paul (v. 22) strengthens Paul's plea for Philemon's hospitable 'welcome' of Onesimus as if he were Paul himself (v. 17). They will want to extend to Onesimus, who is coming ahead of Paul, the same hospitality Paul is requesting for himself. Furthermore, since Paul himself expects to come, Philemon need not send Onesimus back to Paul in prison. The gracious granting of Onesimus as a benevolent gift to Paul can appropriately take place in the house of Philemon as a further 'refreshing' of the holy ones (v. 7).

Within the chiasm the *ὅτι* clause in v. 22 of the B' unit, 'for (*ὅτι*) I am hoping that through your prayers I will be granted to you', corresponds to the *ὅτι* clause in v. 7 of the B unit, 'For (*ὅτι*) I have had much joy and encouragement in your love, because the hearts of the holy ones have been refreshed through you, brother'. Because the hearts of the holy ones 'have been refreshed' by God (divine passive) through (*διὰ*) 'you' (v. 7), Philemon, Paul now hopes that through (*διὰ*) 'your' prayers, that is, through the prayers of the assembly of the 'refreshed' holy ones at Philemon's house (the plural pronoun *ὁμῶν*), 'I will be granted' by God (divine passive) 'to you' (*ὁμῖν*), that is, to the whole assembly (v. 22).

Within the chiasm Paul's hope that 'through your prayers (*προσευχῶν*) I will be granted (*χαρισθήσομαι*) to you' by God in v. 22 of the B' unit corresponds to Paul's thanking (*Εὐχαριστῶ*) God every time he makes mention of Philemon in his prayers (*προσευχῶν*) in v. 4 of the B unit. Through their prayers for Paul to be granted to them, Philemon and the assembly at his house reciprocate and complement Paul's prayers of thanksgiving for Philemon in response to the grace (*χάρις*) of God (v. 3) that unites them all as Christians and fellow workers for the gospel. That through the prayers of all of them Paul 'will be granted' to them by the 'grace' of God under which they all stand further motivates Philemon, with the support and approval of the whole assembly praying for Paul, benevolently to grant Onesimus to Paul as the 'good' that he can do both for Paul and the holy ones (v. 6) not 'as

under compulsion but rather under benevolence' (v. 14, the pivot of the chiasm)⁽⁵⁹⁾.

A'. Paul closes with a framework of imprisonment and partnership under grace (vv. 23-25).

The pronouns referring to Paul (μοι in v. 22; μου in v. 23) serve as catch-words connecting the A' to the B' unit. After addressing the whole assembly at the end of the B' unit, 'through your (plural) prayers I will be granted to you (plural)' (v. 22), Paul resumes addressing 'you' (σε), Philemon alone, at the beginning of the A' unit (v. 23). That Epaphras, 'my fellow captive in *Christ Jesus*', as well as four of Paul's 'fellow workers' (συνεργοί), greets Philemon (vv. 23-24 in the A' unit) reinforces the appeal of Paul as a 'prisoner of *Christ Jesus*'; see also v. 9) to Philemon as Paul's and Timothy's beloved 'fellow worker' (συνεργῶ) (v. 1 in the A unit) in partnership for the gospel⁽⁶⁰⁾.

At the conclusion of the A unit Paul placed his audience within a framework of grace, 'Grace (χάρις) to you (ὕμῃν) and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ' (v. 3). In accord with the love (vv. 5, 7, 9) that corresponds to that grace, Paul appealed for the further 'good' (vv. 6, 14) that Philemon can do for the assembly and for Paul in benevolently granting him Onesimus to work for the gospel (v. 13). At the conclusion of the A' unit Paul reinforces the framework of grace as the motivation for his appeal, 'The grace (χάρις) of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your (ὕμῶν) spirit' (v. 25).

From the grace (χάρις) that is with 'your' (ὕμῶν) spirit (v. 25) Paul further motivates the assembly to pray, so that through 'your' (ὕμῶν) prayers Paul 'will be granted' by grace (χαρισθήσομαι) 'to you' (ὕμῃν) (v. 22). The grace of Paul being granted to the assembly provides the final motivation and occasion for Philemon benevolently (v. 14), from grace, to grant Onesimus to Paul to serve

⁽⁵⁹⁾ On Paul's 'travelogue' in v. 22, FRILINGOS, "For My Child", 104, remarks: 'Despite its threatening undercurrents, however, the travelogue maintains a warm and familiar tone. It does not command obedience but expresses the hope for a family reunion'.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ On 'fellow captive' (συναιχμάλωτος) as a designation for a fellow worker of Paul, see OLLROG, *Mitarbeiter*, 76. "συναιχμάλωτος", *EDNT* III, 297: 'The noun evokes less the idea of normal imprisonment than military usage, namely, "prisoners of war", which Paul and his colleagues become in the battle for the gospel'. See also WANSINK, *Chained in Christ*, 171-172.

on his behalf in the metaphorical imprisonment of the gospel (v. 13).

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Many surmise that what Paul wants of Philemon is unclear. The chiasmic structure of the letter, however, indicates not only what Paul wants from Philemon, namely, Onesimus to serve on his behalf in the work of the gospel (v. 13), but also why he wants it, namely, as a further good that Philemon can do under benevolence (v. 14) for Paul and the holy ones based on love and in response to grace.

In the A unit (vv. 1-3) of the chiasm Paul's greeting as a prisoner of Christ Jesus places the audience of the letter within a framework of God's grace. In response to this grace Paul in the B unit (vv. 4-7) thanks God in his prayers for Philemon's faithful love toward the holy ones, suggesting that as partners they can do a further 'good' for Christ. On the basis of love Paul as an old man and prisoner of Christ Jesus appeals for his 'child' Onesimus in the C unit (vv. 8-10). In the D unit (vv. 11-13) Paul indicates that he would like Onesimus, his very heart, who as a Christian has become 'useful' to both Philemon and Paul, to serve Paul on behalf of Philemon in the work of the gospel. The first half of the chiasm reaches its climax in the E unit (v. 14) with Paul's resolve that the 'good' that Philemon can do in granting him Onesimus be under benevolence.

As the center and pivotal point of the chiasm, the E unit (v. 14) serves as the dominant motivation for the development of Paul's appeal in the second half. Through inverse parallelism with the D unit, in which Paul wants to keep Onesimus for himself, the D' unit (vv. 15-17) suggests that Philemon can have Onesimus back forever by giving him back to Paul after welcoming him as a beloved brother and as a partner like Paul himself. In the C' unit (vv. 18-19) Paul himself offers to pay any debts of his 'child' for whom he appealed in the C unit, Onesimus, but reminds Philemon that he more than owes Paul his very self, thus suggesting Onesimus as payment. Paul in the B' unit (vv. 20-22) wants his 'brother' Philemon to refresh his heart (Onesimus), as he refreshed the hearts of the holy ones in the B unit; in reciprocal and complementary correspondence to Paul's prayers of thanks for grace (B unit), Paul hopes through the prayers of the assembly to be granted to them from grace as further motivation and occasion for Philemon graciously to grant Onesimus to Paul (B' unit). The greetings of grace to the entire assembly that

frame the letter in the A and A' (vv. 23-25) units provide the ultimate motivation for Philemon to grant Onesimus to Paul under the benevolence of grace.

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SUMMARY

This article proposes a new chiastic structure for Paul's letter to Philemon based on rigorous criteria and methodology. The center and pivot of the chiasm, 'but without your consent I resolved to do nothing, so that your good might not be as under compulsion but rather under benevolence' (v. 14), is a key to explicating the letter's supposedly unclear purpose. Paul wants Philemon to give his former slave Onesimus back to Paul as a beloved brother and fellow worker for the gospel of Jesus Christ, because of Philemon's response to the grace of God evident in his faithful love for the holy ones as a beloved brother and fellow worker of Paul.

‘Our Lord and God’ in Rev 4,11: Evidence for the Late Date of Revelation?

The debate over the date of the book of Revelation remains a live issue in contemporary scholarship. The battle lines are drawn between those who hold firmly to the late date of composition in the time of the emperor Domitian and those who have begun to examine afresh the possibility for a date in the reign of Nero. While, for the most part, scholars have fielded the more significant arguments on both sides of this issue, some of the lesser arguments have been neglected. The purpose of this article is to assess the value of one of the lesser arguments for the late date of Revelation, one which, to the best of my knowledge, has not been responded to by any early-date scholar.

Several late-date advocates from the last half of the 20th century have proposed, with varying degrees of specificity, that the phrase ‘our Lord and God’ (ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν; Rev 4,11) derives from the language of the Roman imperial court. This imperial title was supposedly taken over by John in order to make the counter-claim that the Christian God was the one, true ‘Lord and God’. The views of these scholars can be divided into three broad categories: (1) those who regard this phrase as an exact rendering of the Latin title *dominus et deus noster* employed by Domitian⁽¹⁾; (2) those who

(¹) L. MOWRY, “Revelation 4–5 and Early Christian Liturgical Usage”, *JBL* 71 (1952) 80; H. LILJE, *The Last Book of the Bible* (Philadelphia 1957) 108–109; W. BARCLAY, *The Revelation of John* (Philadelphia 1960) I, 164; R.H. MOUNCE, *The Book of Revelation* (NICNT; Grand Rapids 1977) 140; H.H. Hobbs in G.R. BEASLEY-MURRAY – H.H. HOBBS – R.F. ROBBINS, *Revelation. Three Viewpoints* (Nashville 1977) 85; E. SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA, *Invitation to the Book of Revelation* (Garden City 1981) 62, 76; L. VAN HARTINGSVELD, *Revelation. A Practical Commentary* (Grand Rapids 1985) 28; G.R. BEASLEY-MURRAY, *The Book of Revelation* (NCBC; Grand Rapids 1983) 119; L.L. THOMPSON, *The Book of Revelation. Apocalypse and Empire* (New York 1990) 58, 104; H.-J. KLAUCK, “Das Sendschreiben nach Pergamon und der Kaiserkult in der Johannesoffenbarung”, *Bib* 73 (1992) 172; B.M. METZGER, *Breaking the Code. Understanding the Book of Revelation* (Nashville 1993) 51; G.K. BEALE, *The Book of Revelation. A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids 1999) 335.

suggest that the phrase comes from the imperial court and cite Domitian's use of 'our lord and god' as an example, but do not state that his particular title is reflected in Rev 4,11⁽²⁾; and, (3) those who believe the title reflects the language of the imperial court, but do not mention Domitian by name⁽³⁾.

The importance of this argument, especially as formulated by the representative scholars in the first category, is that it could provide a significant clue to the date of Revelation. If Domitian's title *dominus et deus noster* is rendered by ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν in Rev 4,11, then it follows that the book was composed during or after his reign. The strengths of this interpretation are apparent: (1) the Greek and Latin titles appear to be identical; (2) Domitian is regarded by many as the emperor who first required his subjects to address him as 'our lord and god'⁽⁴⁾; (3) the exact phrase 'Our Lord and God' does not appear in the Old Testament as a divine title (MT; LXX), thus rendering a Jewish origin for the title unlikely; (4) in Rev 13, the presentation of a beast with a blasphemous name on each of its seven heads could refer to Domitian's demand to be addressed as 'our lord and god'; and, (5) Rev 4, in which the title 'our Lord and God' appears, can be partially understood against the backdrop of the imperial court or worship.

(²) J. SWEET, *Revelation* (Philadelphia 1990) 121, writes, '*our Lord and God*: in the east a common form of address to the emperor, affected especially by Domitian'; M.E. BORING, *Revelation* (Louisville 1989) 103, remarks, 'The title "Lord and God" (4:8 [sic]) is paralleled by Domitian's insistence that he be addressed by this title'. I place Boring here since the force of 'paralleled' is unclear; D.E. AUNE, "The Influence of Roman Imperial Court Ceremony on the Apocalypse of John", *Papers of the Chicago Society of Biblical Research* 28 (1983) 20-22; ID., *Revelation* (WBC 52; Waco 1997) I, 310.

(³) H. HAILEY, *Revelation. An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids 1979) 172; C.M. Pate, although neither taking a definite position on the date of Revelation nor specifically mentioning 4,11, sees the language of Rev 4-5 as deriving partially from the imperial ceremonial court and mentions the use of such titles as 'god'; this makes him worth mentioning in this category; *Four Views on the Book of Revelation* (ed. C.M. PATE) (Grand Rapids 1998) 4-5.

(⁴) MOUNCE, *Revelation*, 140, writes on Rev 4,11, "our Lord and God" was introduced into the cult of emperor worship by Domitian'. LILJE, *Last Book of the Bible*, 108-109, writes:

The formula "our Lord and God", as we learn from the imperial biographies of Suetonius, was introduced by Domitian into the cult of emperor worship as an expression of homage. First of all he arranged that his procurators should introduce the formula, "our Lord and God commands", into the official documents. After that it became the custom also to address him as *Dominus ac Deus noster*.

These details, coupled with some of the ‘greater arguments’ for the late date (e.g. Irenaeus’ mention of Revelation’s composition in the time of Domitian and Domitian’s reputation as persecutor of Christians) constitute an impressive case. This paper will investigate each of these claims in order to determine whether the title in Rev 4,11 is a counter-claim to Domitian’s title and can therefore serve as a tool for determining the date of the book.

1. Usage of ‘Our Lord and God’ by Domitian

Four ancient authors record that the title ‘lord and god’ was used when addressing the emperor Domitian: Martial (*Epig.* 5.8.1; 7.34.8; 9.66.3), Suetonius (*Dom.* 13.2), Dio Cassius (67.4.7; 67.13.4), and Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 45.1). Both Suetonius and Dio Cassius noted Domitian’s insistence on being called ‘our lord and god’. Suetonius writes:

With no less arrogance he began as follows in issuing a circular letter in the name of his procurators, “Our Master and our God [*dominus et deus noster*] bids that this be done”. And so the custom arose of henceforth addressing him in no other way even in writing or in conversation (Suetonius, *Dom.* 13.2)⁽⁵⁾.

Dio Cassius writes, ‘for he even insisted upon being regarded as a god and took vast pride in being called ‘master’ and ‘god’ (καὶ δεσπότης καλούμενος καὶ θεὸς ὑπερηγάλλετο). These titles were used not merely in speech but also in written documents’ (67.4.7)⁽⁶⁾. Other passages simply record examples of subjects addressing him by this combined title. Dio Chrysostom records that Greeks and barbarians addressed Domitian as δεσπότης καὶ θεός (*Or.* 45.1), while Dio Cassius tells of how Juventius Celsus, condemned for taking part in a conspiracy, saved his own life by addressing the emperor as both ‘lord’ and ‘god’ (δεσπότην τε καὶ θεόν), terms that many others had already used (67.13.4). Martial himself addressed Domitian as *noster ... dominoque deoque* (*Epig.* 9.66) and *domini deiue noster* (*Epig.* 5.8; 7.34). Writers from a later period claim that Domitian had gone so far as to order this use of the title (Aurelius Victor, *De Caes.* 11.2; *Epist. de Caes.* 11.6; Eutropius 7.23; Orosius, 7.10).

⁽⁵⁾ Translation from Suetonius, *The Lives of the Caesars* (trans. J.C. Rolfe) (Cambridge 1914) II, 367.

⁽⁶⁾ Translation from Dio Cassius, *Roman History* (trans. Ernest Cary) (Cambridge 1968) VIII, 329.

Until recently, the majority of historians and biblical scholars have accepted this negative presentation of Domitian at face value. However, scholars such as B.W. Jones and L.L. Thompson have argued that, although some subjects addressed Domitian as 'lord and god', he did not require them to do so⁽⁷⁾. These studies re-evaluate contemporaneous sources, later sources, and epigraphic evidence for the use of the title by Domitian. Their interpretations of the earlier and later sources were essentially the same. Thompson, claims that this negative portrayal of Domitian's reign was not written by neutral observers, but by rhetoricians under Trajan (i. e. Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius) who sought to promote the ideology of a new era by maligning the emperor's Flavian predecessors. Thompson notes that authors such as Quintilian, Statius, Frontinus, Martial, and Silius Italicus, who wrote during the reign of Domitian, paint a more positive picture of his administration. Not only do they praise his public rule, they do not even refer to him as 'lord and god' in their writings as supposedly would have been required. Statius even provides a bit of counter-evidence by noting that when Domitian was acclaimed *dominus* at one of his Saturnalia, the emperor forbade the practice (*Silv.* 1.6.81-84). Thompson concludes that this title was used by those 'approaching power from below' (e.g. Martial), but that 'Domitian did not encourage divine titles such as *dominus et deus noster*, nor is there evidence that Domitian had become a mad tyrant seeking divinization'⁽⁸⁾. Jones notes that the habit of calling Domitian 'our lord and god' developed from a letter he dictated and that later writers (i.e. Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, and Orosius) 'repeat and embellish it'⁽⁹⁾. Like Thompson, he regards the use of the title as sycophancy: 'terms used by flatterers such as Martial, Statius, Juventius Celsus (or Pliny) to secure a favour from an autocrat hardly constitute proof that they were instructed or required to use them'⁽¹⁰⁾. Jones continues, 'He obviously knew that he was not a God, and, whilst he did not ask or demand to be addressed as one, he did not actively discourage the few flatterers who did'⁽¹¹⁾.

(7) B.W. JONES, *The Emperor Domitian* (New York 1992) 108-109; THOMPSON, *Book of Revelation*, 104-107.

(8) THOMPSON, *Book of Revelation*, 107.

(9) JONES, *Domitian*, 108-109.

(10) *Ibid.*, 108.

(11) *Ibid.*, 109.

The epigraphic evidence also presented an obstacle for the theory that Domitian promoted the title. Thompson noted that inscriptions, coins, and medallions from Domitian's period do not bear the title 'lord and god' ⁽¹²⁾. Jones writes:

In view of Domitian's concern for theological niceties, the story is all but incredible. The best an emperor could expect after death was to be declared a *divus*, never a *deus*: a living one had to make do with even less. If an emperor such as Domitian could overcome that barrier, why should he hesitate to proclaim it publicly (and epigraphically)? Senatorial abhorrence would not have concerned him ⁽¹³⁾.

Jones noted that, although the title *dominus* does appear on inscriptions, it is used exclusively in the sense that slaves used it of their masters ⁽¹⁴⁾.

These theories have not been accepted wholesale. Slater has pointed out that the writers of Domitian's day may also have been biased in their positive portrayal of the emperor and that Quintilian, while not employing 'our lord and god', did deem the emperor worthy of divine honors ⁽¹⁵⁾. Aune noted, contrary to the assertion of Thompson, that two of the authors of Domitian's time actually used the titles 'lord and god'. Martial used 'lord and god' in tandem several times, while Statius used 'lord' and 'god' separately ⁽¹⁶⁾. Aune further noted that Thompson did not adequately appreciate the different contexts in which Dio Cassius mentioned the use of the title and that he failed to evaluate the testimony of Dio Chrysostom. He attributed the absence of the title 'lord and god' on coins, medallions, and inscriptions to the fact that such nomenclature was not a part of official titulary ⁽¹⁷⁾.

On the other hand, these very scholars have accepted certain aspects of Thompson's reconstruction. Aune writes, 'Thompson is correct ... in arguing that Domitian did not demand greater divine honors than his imperial predecessors or successors' ⁽¹⁸⁾. Slater even

⁽¹²⁾ THOMPSON, *Book of Revelation*, 105

⁽¹³⁾ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁽¹⁴⁾ JONES, *Domitian*, 108.

⁽¹⁵⁾ T.B. SLATER, "On the Social Setting of the Revelation to John", *NTS* 44 (1998) 236. The latter is a moot point, since Thompson does not deny that divine honors were offered to Domitian. Thompson's point is merely that Domitian did not require this practice himself.

⁽¹⁶⁾ AUNE, *Revelation*, I, 311.

⁽¹⁷⁾ *Ibid.*, I, 311.

⁽¹⁸⁾ *Ibid.*

concedes that 'Thompson's insistence that Domitian was not worshipped as 'our lord and god' may be strictly true, but it is equally true that Quintilian clearly sees him as worthy of divine honours, a detail which undermines, to some degree, Thompson's point' ⁽¹⁹⁾. The evidence does seem to favor Domitian's acceptance of divine appellations and even of the specific title 'our lord and god', but whether or not he demanded the use of such honors is debatable. Having obtained an affirmative answer that the title was used of him, the next issue is whether the application of this title to him was unique, so much so that one could identify him as its sole bearer and the intended target of the alleged parody in Rev 4,11.

The use of the titles 'lord' and 'god' in tandem in ruler cults predates the time of Domitian by more than a century in the Greek-speaking east. In the Hellenistic ruler cult, 'lord and god' was not an official title, but it was rather common nonetheless:

The title 'god and lord' is of interest, for it does not appear to be found earlier than Auletes. In *P. Bouriant* 12 (88 BCE) we have τὸν μέγιστον θεόν of Soter, but in BGU VIII we have θ.κ.κ.β. four times: διὰ τὴν τύχην τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου βασιλέως (1764.8); τοῦ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου βασιλέως (1789.3) and the plural τῶν θεῶν καὶ κυρίων βασιλέων (1834.7 [51/50 BCE] and 1845.5); in 1838.1 (51/50 BCE) an official is described τῷ θεοτάτῳ καὶ κυρίῳ στρατηγῷ ⁽²⁰⁾.

A papyrus from around the time of Ptolemy Auletes (c. 69-58 BCE) records that a religious association, dedicated to Zeus, was to arrange for a monthly banquet for its members 'at which they should in a common room pouring libations, pray, and perform other customary rites on behalf of the god and lord, the king' (ὑπὲρ τε τ[ο]ῦ θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου[υ] βασιλέως) ⁽²¹⁾. The combined title is used at least twice in the Roman imperial period:

⁽¹⁹⁾ SLATER, "Social Setting", 237. In a similar vein, he writes, 'Moreover, even if Domitian did not demand that he be referred to as 'our lord and god', it does not mean that no one deemed him worthy of divine honours', 238.

⁽²⁰⁾ A.D. NOCK – T.S. SKEAT – C. ROBERTS, "The Gild of Zeus Hypsistos", *HTR* 29 (1936) 50.

⁽²¹⁾ Ibid., 40, 42. A. DEISSMANN, *Light from the Ancient East* (New York 1927; repr.: Peabody, Mass. 1995), 352, lists the similar titles of Ptolemy XIII 'the lord king god' (τοῦ κυρίου βασιλέως θεοῦ) and of Ptolemy XIV and Cleopatra 'the lords, the most great gods' (τοῖς κυρίοις θεοῖς μεγίστοις). Alexander the Great and his successors were on occasion called 'gods', both while living and posthumously. Antiochus IV of Syria was the first to include the title 'god' on his coins. See S.R.F. PRICE, "Gods and Emperors: the Greek Language of the Roman Imperial Cult", *JHS* 104 (1984) 81.

...thereafter we find of Augustus in *P. Oxy.* 1143 (c. 1 CE) *θυ]σίας καὶ σπονδὰς ὑπὲρ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου αὐτοκράτορος*, and the phrase recurs in BGU VIII 1200.11 (2/1 BCE) and is used of an official under Augustus in BGU VIII 1201 (restoration *τῷ θεῷ[ι καὶ κυρί]ωι* is likely enough)⁽²²⁾.

Thus, the two titles ‘lord’ and ‘god’ were used in tandem for royalty and officials during the Ptolemaic period and the early Roman Empire.

In addition to the usage of the combined title ‘lord and god’, the independent use of the titles ‘lord’⁽²³⁾ and ‘god’ is also attested when referring to Roman leaders prior to Domitian’s time. The Romans exclusively reserved the imperial titles ‘god’ (*divus*) and ‘god, son of god’ (*divi filius divus*) for emperors who had been deified posthumously by the Roman Senate, but the Greeks frequently used these and similar titles of living emperors as well⁽²⁴⁾. Although the majority of Roman emperors did not demand their subjects to address them by such titles and even sometimes discouraged the practice (*dominus* was rejected by Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius)⁽²⁵⁾, they were still offered by Greek worshippers, as we shall see below.

Julius Caesar was the first Roman to be deified posthumously. In 42 BCE, the Roman Senate gave him the name *Divus Iulius*. However, even during his lifetime, he was referred to as a god in an inscription commissioned by the town council of Ephesus in conjunction with other Greek cities of Asia (c. 48 BCE). It reads, ‘the God manifest, offspring of Ares and Aphrodite, and common saviour of human life’ (*τὸν ἀπὸ Ἀρεως καὶ Ἀφροδε[ι]της θεὸν ἐπιφανῆ καὶ κοινὸν τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου βίου σωτήρα*)⁽²⁶⁾.

In a passage mentioned above, Augustus (27 BCE–14 CE) was called ‘the god and lord emperor’ during his lifetime (*ὑπὲρ τοῦ θεοῦ*

⁽²²⁾ NOCK – SKEAT – ROBERTS, “Gild of Zeus”, 50. These scholars note that the title disappeared for a while after the time of Augustus.

⁽²³⁾ The word *κύριος* has a wide semantic range. It may refer to the owner of slaves or property (Luke 12,45), one worthy of respect (e.g. an apostle [Acts 16,30] or ruler [Matt 27,63]), supernatural beings (e.g. angel [Acts 10,4]; God; Jesus), or serve as a translation of YHWH (Matt 22,37=Deut 6,5). This essay does not propose to determine the intended usage of ‘lord’ when applied to Roman emperors, but merely wishes to demonstrate that the title was used of and by them frequently. When ‘lord’ appears alone in imperial contexts, it does not necessarily have divine connotations (e. g. Matt 27,63; Philo, *Leg.* 45.356).

⁽²⁴⁾ PRICE, “Gods and Emperors”, 83, 84.

⁽²⁵⁾ AUNE, *Revelation*, I, 311.

⁽²⁶⁾ DEISSMANN, *Light*, 344.

καὶ κυρίου αὐτοκράτορος). The separate titles ‘lord’ and ‘god’ were also used of him. An oath formula from the first year of Augustus swears ‘by Caesar, god of god’ (Καίσαρ[α] θεὸν ἐκ θεοῦ) and an inscription from Socnopaei Nesos in Fayum (March 17, 24 BCE) portrays him as Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, and calls him ‘god of god and goddess’ (ὕπαρχον θεὸς ἐκ θεοῦ καὶ θεᾶς)⁽²⁷⁾. Another oath (c. 3 BCE) calls upon the living Augustus as a witness along with the other deities: Δία, Γῆν, Ἥλιον, θεοὺς πάντα[ς καὶ πά]σας καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν Σεβασ[τ]ὸν...⁽²⁸⁾. An inscription from Pergamum (16 CE) reads: τὸν νεωκόρον θεᾶς Ῥώμης καὶ θεοῦ Σεβαστοῦ Καίσαρος, while another speaks of a local benefactor who performed sacrifices and built temples so that others might witness his piety ‘towards the god’ (εἰς τὸν θεόν [*sic*], i.e. Augustus)⁽²⁹⁾. An inscription from Priene (9 BCE) mentioned ‘the birthday of the god’ (ἡ γενέθλιος ἡμέρα τοῦ θεοῦ)⁽³⁰⁾. The posthumous deification of Julius Caesar, ‘provided Octavian (later known as Augustus) the ground to claim that he was ‘son of god’, being heir and adopted son of the divine Julius’⁽³¹⁾. The following sources claim that he was ‘son of god’: ἡ καίσαρος κράτησις θεοῦ υἱοῦ (*P. Ryl.* 601; *PSI* 1150); καίσαρ θεοῦ υἱὸς Αὐτοκράτωρ (*P. Teb.* 382), Καίσαρος αὐτοκράτωρ θεοῦ υἱὸς Ζεὺς ἔλευθέριος (*P. Oslo* 26; *SB* 8824)⁽³²⁾. Augustus was called both ‘god’ and ‘son of god’ in a letter of Tiberius (...θεοῦ Καίσα[α]ρος θεοῦ υἱοῦ Σεβαστοῦ Σωτῆρος Ἐλευθερίου...) (*SEG* XI 922-923)⁽³³⁾ and on a marble pedestal from Pergamum erected during the lifetime ([Αὐτοκράτ]ορ[α Κ]αίσαρα [θ]εοῦ υἱὸν θεὸν Σεβαστὸ[ν] [πάσης] γῆ[ς καὶ θ[α]λάσσης [ἐ]π[ό]π[τ]ην)⁽³⁴⁾. Even Vergil refers to Augustus as one of ‘the gods among us’ (*praesentes deos*)⁽³⁵⁾.

Tiberius (14-37 CE) was also referred to as ‘son of god’ and

⁽²⁷⁾ *Ibid.*, 344-345.

⁽²⁸⁾ PRICE, “Gods and Emperors”, 89, n. 88.

⁽²⁹⁾ *Ibid.*, 85 and 88 respectively.

⁽³⁰⁾ H. KOESTER, *Ancient Christian Gospels* (Philadelphia 1990) 4.

⁽³¹⁾ TAE HUN KIM, “The Anarthrous υἱὸς θεοῦ in Mark 15,39 and the Roman Imperial Cult”, *Bib* 79 (1998) 228.

⁽³²⁾ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁽³³⁾ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁽³⁴⁾ DEISSMANN, *Light*, 347. An inscription from Priene (c. 9 BCE) spoke of the birthday of Augustus ‘the most divine Caesar’ (τοῦ θηοτάτου Καίσαρο[ς]), *ibid.*

⁽³⁵⁾ Vergil, *Ec.* 1.41; A.A. BARRETT, *Caligula. The Corruption of Power* (New York 1990) 140.

‘god’: Τιβέριος Καῖσαρ Σεβαστὸς θεοῦ υἱὸς αὐτοκράτωρ (SB 8317); [Τιβέριος Καῖσαρ θεοῦ Σεβ]αστοῦ υἱὸς [Σ]εβαστὸς ἀρχιερεὺς (SEG XI 922-923)⁽³⁶⁾. A denarius from 37 CE refers to him as *divus*⁽³⁷⁾. Despite the fact that Tiberius officially rejected the title ‘lord’ (Suetonius, *Tib.* 27), the Lysanius inscription from Syria (prior to 29 CE) refers to Tiberius and his mother Livia as ‘the lords Augusti’ (τῶν κυρίων Σε[βαστῶν])⁽³⁸⁾.

Gaius or ‘Caligula’ (37-41 CE) was called ‘lord’⁽³⁹⁾, ‘new god’ νέωι θεῶι (IGR IV 1094), ‘son of Ares’ Ἄρηος υἱόν (CIA III 444a), and ‘son of Augustus, a new Ares’ Σεβαστοῦ υἱὸν νέον Ἄρη (CIA III 444)⁽⁴⁰⁾. Josephus claims that Gaius ‘wished to be considered a god and to be hailed as such’ (*Bell. iud.* 2.184)⁽⁴¹⁾. Philo of Alexandria records that Gaius first likened himself to demigods (*Leg.* 11.78), but that he later compared himself to the supreme deities (*Leg.* 13.93). Gaius began not only to say but to think he was a god (*Leg.* 25.162). Among his titles mentioned by Philo are ‘god’, ‘ruler and master’ (*Leg.* 33.247), ‘master and lord’ (*Leg.* 36.286), and ‘lord’ (*Leg.* 45.356).

In his letter to Alexandria (41 CE), Claudius (41-54 CE) made it clear that the establishment of temples and priests was ‘a prerogative to the gods alone’⁽⁴²⁾. Yet, this did not prevent some from addressing him as ‘lord’ and ‘god’: ὁ κύριος (OPetr 209); Τιβέριος Κλαύδιος κύριος (SB 4331); Τιβέριος Κλαύδιος Καῖσαρ Σεβαστὸς αὐτοκράτωρ ὁ κύριος (GOA 1038)⁽⁴³⁾; θεὸς Κλαύδιος (PSI 1235; *P. Oxy.* 713); θεὸς Καῖσαρ (*P. Oxy.* 808; *P. Oxy.* 1021); θεὸς Σεβαστός (*P. Mich.* 244)⁽⁴⁴⁾; θεὸν ἐπιφανῆ⁽⁴⁵⁾; *deus noster Caesar* (Scribonius Largus, *Praef.* C60, C163)⁽⁴⁶⁾.

Nero (54-68 CE) was called ‘lord’ and ‘god’ in several

⁽³⁶⁾ KIM, “υἱὸς θεοῦ”, 233.

⁽³⁷⁾ D.L. JONES, “Roman Imperial Cult”, *AncBD* V, 806-809.

⁽³⁸⁾ DEISSMANN, *Light*, 353.

⁽³⁹⁾ *Ibid.*, 353.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ KIM, “υἱὸς θεοῦ”, 235.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Translation from *Josephus*. With an English Translation by H. St. J. Thackeray. Vol. II: The Jewish War (LCL; London – Cambridge, MA 1967) 395.

⁽⁴²⁾ JONES, “Roman Imperial Cult”.

⁽⁴³⁾ KIM, “υἱὸς θεοῦ”, 235.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ *Ibid.*, 235.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ PRICE, “Gods and Emperors”, 86.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ BARRETT, *Caligula*, 140.

inscriptions: Νέρων κύριος⁽⁴⁷⁾, Νέρων ὁ κύριος (*P. London.* 1215; *P. Oxy.* 246; GOA 1038), Νέρων Καῖσαρ ὁ κύριος (*O. Petr.* 288; *P. Oxy.* 246); ὁ τοῦ παντὸς κόσμου κύριος Νέρων (SIG 814)⁽⁴⁸⁾, and τῷ κυρίῳ (Acts 25,26); τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ μεγίστου θεῶν (IM 157b); Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀρχὴ ὣν τε πάντων ἀγαθῶν (*P. Oxy.* 1021)⁽⁴⁹⁾; θεὸς Νέρων⁽⁵⁰⁾; ἀγαθῷ θεῷ⁽⁵¹⁾. He was also known as ‘son of god Claudius’ and ‘greatgrandson of god Sebastos’ θεοῦ Κλαυδίου υἱὸς ... θεοῦ Σεβαστοῦ ἀπόγονος⁽⁵²⁾. An inscription from Salamis (c. 60-61 CE) calls him ‘god and savior’ (θεῷ καὶ σωτήρι)⁽⁵³⁾. In 66 CE, the Parthian king Tiradates addressed Nero as ‘master’ (δέσποτα) and ‘my god’ (τὸν ἐμὸν θεόν) within the course of a short speech (Dio Cassius, 62.14), the exact terminology Dio Cassius claims Domitian employed (67.4.7), except that the two titles were not connected by καί.

Vespasian (69-79 CE) did not usually accept divine honors. He even jested as he died that he thought he was becoming a god (Suetonius, *Vesp.* 23.4; Dio Cassius, 66.17). Nevertheless, inscriptions refer to him as either ‘lord’ and ‘god’: Οὐεσπασιανὸς ὁ κύριος (*P. Oxy.* 1439; SB 1927); Οὐεσπασιανὸς αὐτοκράτωρ ὁ κύριος (GOA 439; SC 3563); θεὸς Οὐεσπασιανός (*P. Oxy.* 257; *P. Oxy.* 1112)⁽⁵⁴⁾. The Sicarii regarded God alone as their lord (θεὸν δὲ μόνον ἡγεῖσθαι δεσπότην; *Bell. iud.* 7.411), and even under torture refused to acknowledge Vespasian as lord (Καῖσαρα δεσπότην; *Bell. iud.* 7.418-419).

This survey of texts indicates that the combined title ‘lord and god’ was applied to Ptolemaic rulers and to at least one Roman emperor prior to Domitian (i.e. Augustus, and perhaps to Nero). The separate titles ‘lord’ and ‘god’ were applied to all the Roman emperors treated above. Although Domitian was addressed by the title ‘lord and god’, the evidence suggests that other emperors were referred to by the same or similar terminology. Even though the

⁽⁴⁷⁾ DEISSMANN, *Light*, 354.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ KIM, “υἱὸς θεοῦ”, 235.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ *Ibid.*, 235.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Legends on coins from Cyme and Synas. See *The Cambridge Ancient History* (eds. S.A. COOK et al.) (Cambridge 1966) X, 732.

⁽⁵¹⁾ DEISSMANN, *Light*, 345, n. 4.

⁽⁵²⁾ PRICE, “Gods and Emperors”, 84.

⁽⁵³⁾ M. SMALLWOOD, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius Claudius & Nero* (Cambridge 1967) 52, entry 145.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ KIM, “υἱὸς θεοῦ”, 235.

Latin *dominus et deus noster* accurately renders ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, one cannot guarantee this title is the sole possession of one emperor. Thus, it seems to go beyond the data to claim that the title 'lord and god' in Rev 4,11 could only refer to Domitian and securely date Revelation to his reign.

While the evidence will not allow one to identify Domitian as 'the' emperor who used this title, the possibility that John used this title to parody some emperor or imperial claims in general remains a viable option. However, there is yet another option for the origin of the title that must be explored. To this subject we now turn our attention.

2. Usage of 'Lord and God' in the Septuagint

Some scholars have ruled out a Jewish origin for the title 'our Lord and God' because an exact match for it cannot be found in the LXX and because it is uncharacteristic of Jewish divine nomenclature⁽⁵⁵⁾. Mowry writes:

The third phrase, ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, appears in Rev 4 11. What is striking about this departure from traditional Jewish expression is that the word καὶ has been inserted in the customary title for Deity, κύριος ὁ θεός. The modification may seem to be quite innocuous but in reality was of great significance for Christians living at the close of the first century A.D. If the Seer wrote during the period of Domitian's persecutions the inserted καὶ had subtle overtones of importance for Christians enduring martyrdom, for Domitian wished to be called *Dominus et Deus noster*, the Latin form of the title for deity appearing in Biblical documents only in this reference in the book of Revelation. It seems likely, therefore, that a Christian at the end of the first century in the face of powerful forces at work to destroy his faith has by the insertion of the καὶ into the customary title κύριος ὁ θεός reaffirmed his loyalty to God as his Creator and Savior⁽⁵⁶⁾.

Beasley-Murray is even more adamant in denying the existence of a precise parallel in the LXX: 'The precise phrase *our Lord and God* does not occur in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, but it is the exact rendering of the title, blasphemously claimed by the emperor Domitian, *Dominus et Deus noster*'⁽⁵⁷⁾. These statements are technically correct, for an 'exact parallel' cannot be found in the LXX.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Greco-Roman deities were also referred to by this combined title. For instance, Zen (i.e. Zeus) was called θεὸν καὶ κύριον, Diodorus of Sicily 3.61.6.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ MOWRY, "Revelation 4-5", 80.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ BEASLEY-MURRAY, *Revelation*, 119.

However, the quest for an exact parallel may be not be the proper methodology to use when searching for the origin of some titles.

There are at least three objections to seeking an 'exact parallel' that warrant some discussion prior to an examination of potential parallels to 'Lord and God' in the LXX. First, most scholars have neither sought nor required exact OT parallels for the various divine titles used in Revelation. Most scholars suggest OT parallels or origins for the following titles, even though none of them have an exact match in the LXX: (1) ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος (1,4,8; and variations 4,8; 11,17; 16,5)⁽⁵⁸⁾; (2) τῶν ἐπτὰ πνευμάτων (1,4; add τοῦ θεοῦ, 3,1; 4,5; 5,6); (3) ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός (1,5)⁽⁵⁹⁾, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός (3,14), or πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός (19,11); (4) ὁ πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν (1,5)⁽⁶⁰⁾; (5) ὁ ἄρχων τῶν βασιλείων τῆς γῆς (1,5)⁽⁶¹⁾; (6) τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ (1,8; 21,6; 22,13); (7) ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος (1,17; 2,8; 22,13)⁽⁶²⁾; (8) ὁ κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων τῶν προφητῶν (22,6)⁽⁶³⁾; (9) ὁ ἀμὴν (3,14)⁽⁶⁴⁾; (10) ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ (3,14)⁽⁶⁵⁾; (11) ὁ λέων ὁ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰούδα (5,5)⁽⁶⁶⁾; (12) ἡ ῥίζα Δαβὶδ (5,5) or ἡ ῥίζα καὶ τὸ γένος Δαβὶδ (22,16)⁽⁶⁷⁾; (13) κύριος κυρίων ἐστὶν καὶ βασιλεὺς βασιλέων

⁽⁵⁸⁾ This title is usually connected to Exod 3,14 (ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν), but the exact phrase cannot be found in the OT or early Christian literature. The closest parallel is *Tg. Ps.-J. Deut 32,39* (AUNE, *Revelation*, I, 32).

⁽⁵⁹⁾ This title may derive from Ps 89,37, ὁ μάρτυς ἐν οὐρανῷ πιστός (BEALE, *Revelation*, 190) or from Prov 14,5,25 (AUNE, *Revelation*, I, 257).

⁽⁶⁰⁾ The word 'firstborn' appears in Ps 89,27 (BEALE, *Revelation*, 190).

⁽⁶¹⁾ The phrase ὑψηλὸν παρὰ τοῖς βασιλεῦσι τῆς γῆς is found in Ps 89,27 (BEALE, *Revelation*, 190).

⁽⁶²⁾ This title is probably based on several passages in Isaiah (AUNE, *Revelation*, I, 101): Isa 41,4 (ἐγὼ θεὸς πρῶτος καὶ εἰς τὰ ἐπερχόμενα ἐγώ εἰμι); 44,6 (ἐγὼ πρῶτος καὶ ἐγὼ μετὰ ταῦτα); 48,12 (ἐγὼ εἰμι πρῶτος καὶ ἐγώ εἰμι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). Nevertheless, no exact match in the OT exists.

⁽⁶³⁾ W. FOERSTER, "κύριος", *TDNT* III, 1087.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ Isa 65,16 (MOUNCE, *Revelation*, 124).

⁽⁶⁵⁾ Perhaps this title is based on Prov 8,22 (AUNE, *Revelation*, I, 256).

⁽⁶⁶⁾ The 'lion of Judah' is usually taken as an allusion to Gen 49,9 (AUNE, *Revelation*, I, 350), despite the fact that it is not an exact parallel ('a lion's whelp', σκύμνος λέοντος Ἰούδα).

⁽⁶⁷⁾ The closest parallels to this title are 'stem out of the root of Jesse' (ῥάβδος ἐκ τῆς ῥίζης Ἰεσσαί; Isa 11,1 LXX), 'the root of Jesse' (ἡ ῥίζα τοῦ Ἰεσσαί; Isa 11,10), the 'branch' for David (ἀνατολήν; Jer 23,5; ἀνατολήν; 33,15 not in MT), and simply 'branch' (ἀνατολήν; Zech 3,8; 6,12). An exact parallel does not appear in the OT, but one does appear in the Qumran material (4Q252 v 3-4; AUNE, *Revelation*, I, 350).

(17,14) or βασιλεὺς βασιλέων καὶ κύριος κυρίων (19,16)⁽⁶⁸⁾; and, (14) ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός (22,16; cf. 2,28)⁽⁶⁹⁾. Since, as most scholars agree, these titles have their origin in the OT, even though they are not identical to any OT title, the absence of an 'exact parallel' for 'Lord and God' in the OT should not seem odd. Scholars working with other titles in Revelation have been content to locate an 'approximate parallel' in the place of an 'exact parallel'. To demand a perfect match may be asking too much of most titular formulae.

Second, divine titles in Revelation are not always static. The fact that some of these titles vary slightly in form (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 12 and 13 above) should caution one about being too demanding of a parallel. The flexibility of such formulations is evident in the various ways in which 'Lord' and 'God' are combined in these examples from Revelation: (1) κύριος ὁ θεός (1,8; 4,8; 18,8; 19,6?; 21,22; 22,5); 2) κυρίε ὁ θεός (11,17; 15,3; 16,7); (3) ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν (4,11); (4) ὁ κύριος ὁ θεός (22,5.6); and, perhaps (5) κύριος ὁ θεὸς [ἡμῶν] (19,6)⁽⁷⁰⁾. The word 'Lord' may (i.e. 3, 4) or may not be preceded by the definite article (i.e. 1, 2, 5). 'Lord' may appear in the nominative case (i.e. 1, 3, 4, 5) or in the vocative (i.e. 2). A personal pronoun may be attached to the entire title (i.e. 3, 5?). A conjunction may be inserted between 'Lord' and 'God' (i.e. 3). It would be difficult to select one of these examples to serve as the representative for the entire group, even though it is apparent that all of these examples are variations of the same title.

Third, and perhaps most significant, the title 'lord and god' used of Domitian is not uniform in the sources. Beasley-Murray, Mowry, and others have accepted the title *dominus et deus noster* used by Suetonius as normative, when, indeed, several versions of this title exist. The first variation, *dominus et deus noster*, which was

⁽⁶⁸⁾ Even though several OT texts contain portions of this title, the closest parallels to it are 1 En 9,4 and Dan 4,37 LXX (αὐτὸς ἐστι θεὸς τῶν θεῶν καὶ κύριος τῶν κυρίων καὶ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλείων), an expansion missing from the MT and Theodotian. See G.K. BEALE, "The Origin of the Title 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords' in Revelation 17.14", *NTS* 31 (1985) 618-620.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ Several find reference to Num 24,17 in this title; BEASLEY-MURRAY, *Revelation*, 343; MOUNCE, *Revelation*, 395; M. DE JONGE, *Christology in Context. The Earliest Christian Response to Jesus* (Philadelphia 1988) 231. However, this is not an exact OT match (ἀνατελεῖ ἄστρον ἐξ Ἰακώβ).

⁽⁷⁰⁾ For a discussion of this variant, see B.M. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York 1975) 760.

popularized by Suetonius, uses the titles in tandem. The usage by Martial and Dio Chrysostom falls under the rubric of this variant, although technically Martial's variant is distinguished by his preference for *-que* over *et*⁽⁷¹⁾. The second variation, found in both Dio Cassius and Martial, employs a 'both ... and' (or 'not only ... but also') construction (καί ... καί; *-que* ... *-que*)⁽⁷²⁾. This construction indicates the titles were regarded as separate ('both 'lord' and 'god' ', not 'lord and god'). The third variation (τὲ καί), employed by Dio Cassius⁽⁷³⁾, is a bit ambiguous for it could be either a 'both ... and' construction, favoring independent use of the titles, or it could simply mean 'and', thus allowing for the use of the titles in tandem. Translation issues also haunt the 'exact parallel' approach. When rendering *dominus* into Greek, should one utilize δεσπότης, as in Dio Chrysostom and Dio Cassius, or κύριος, as in Rev 4,11? Finally, the omission of words must be taken into consideration. Dio Cassius did not add the pronoun 'our' to 'lord' and 'god, as did Suetonius and Martial. Obviously, one has to allow for a modicum of flexibility in the structure of Domitian's titles, for, simply put, one cannot seek an 'exact parallel' for a title that is not consistent itself.

Therefore, our quest for parallels in the LXX will begin with a definition of terms. An 'exact parallel' is defined as one that matches the phrase ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν in every detail (so Beasley-Murray). An 'approximate parallel' is defined as one that contains the basic wording and structure of a phrase (e.g. [καὶ +] κύριος + καὶ + θεός). In addition, an 'approximate parallel' allows for the transposition of the words (e.g. κύριος and θεός), the replacement of key words with synonyms (e.g. δεσπότης for κύριος; τὲ καὶ for καὶ ... καί), and the addition of other words to a phrase. Additions

⁽⁷¹⁾ Martial, *Epig.* 5.8; 7.34, has *domini deque noster*. Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 45.1, has δεσπότης καὶ θεός.

⁽⁷²⁾ Dio Cassius, 67.4.7, states, 'for he even insisted upon being regarded as a god and took vast pride in being called "master" and "god" (καὶ δεσπότης καλούμενος καὶ θεὸς ὑπερηγάλλετο). These titles were used not merely in speech but also in written records'. Note that Cary's translation (*Dio's Roman History*. With an English Translation by Earnest Cary on the Basis of the Version of Herbert Baldwin Foster [LCL; Cambridge, MA – London 1982] 329) correctly regards 'master' and 'god' as separate titles, as can be seen by his placement of the quotation marks. Martial, *Epig.* 9.66, has *nostro ... dominoque deoque*.

⁽⁷³⁾ Δεσπότην τε καὶ θεόν (Dio Cassius, 67.13.4).

would include such items as the difference or absence of pronouns (e.g. 'me' 'your' for 'our') or the expansion of divine titles (e.g. 'God of gods').

With this sort of definition in hand, several 'approximate parallels' to ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν can be identified in the LXX. The closest parallels are ὁ θεὸς μου καὶ ὁ κύριος μου (Ps 34,23), θεὸς θεῶν καὶ κύριος τῶν βασιλέων (Dan 2,47), αὐτὸς ἡμῶν κύριός ἐστιν καὶ αὐτὸς θεὸς ἡμῶν καὶ αὐτὸς πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ αὐτὸς θεὸς εἰς πάντα τοὺς αἰῶνας (Tob 13,4), ὁ κύριος αὐτῶν καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτῶν (Jdt 5,21), τὸν θεὸν ἡμῶν καὶ κύριον τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν (Jdt 7,28), and κύριε πάτερ καὶ θεὲ ζωῆς μου (Sir 23,4)⁽⁷⁴⁾. These six examples demonstrate that, contrary to Mowry, the insertion of καὶ between κύριος ὁ θεός was not unknown in traditional Jewish usage. They also demonstrate that, contrary to Beasley-Murray, parallels for 'Lord and God' do exist in the LXX, if one allows for a few minor differences⁽⁷⁵⁾.

The use of the title 'Lord and God' in Judaism is not limited to the LXX. Philo of Alexandria used the phrase κύριος καὶ θεός in his comments on Genesis and regarded it as identical or interchangeable with κύριος ὁ θεός, the title actually used in the LXX (*Som* 1.159-160; based on Gen 28,13; *Quis Her.* 22, based on Gen 15,2; cf. *Questions and Answers on Gen.* 2.53, based on Gen 8,21). These two passages are clear examples of his insertion of καὶ between κύριος and θεός.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ Similar constructions employing κύριος or θεός with καὶ and other words are used in the LXX. E.g. ὁ βασιλεὺς μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου (Ps 43,5; 83,4); θεὸς μέγας κύριος καὶ βασιλεὺς μέγας (Ps 94,3), θεὸν καὶ σωτήρα (Esth 15,2), θεὸν αὐτῶν καὶ πατέρα (3 Macc 5,7) and κύριε πάτερ καὶ δέσποτα ζωῆς μου (Sir 23,1).

⁽⁷⁵⁾ The more common title for God was κύριος ὁ θεός, but the following sampling of passages demonstrates that tremendous variety of combinations of 'Lord' and 'God' in the LXX: κύριος ὁ θεός (Ps 84,9; Jonah 4,6), ὁ κύριος ὁ θεός (2 Macc 7,6), κύριος ὁ θεός + pronoun (σοῦ [Exod 20,1; Hos 13,4; Mic 7,10]; ὑμῶν [Lev 19,36; Joel 3,17]; μου [Job 7,1; Ps 7,2; 29,3; Zech 13,9]; ἡμῶν [Deut 5,24; Ps 98,8; 104,7]; αὐτῶν [Zeph 2,7; Zech 10,6]), κύριε ὁ θεός (2 Chr 20,6; Ps 83,9), κύριος ὁ θεός ὁ παντοκράτωρ (Amos 3,13; 4,13), κύριος κύριος ὁ θεός ὁ παντοκράτωρ (Amos 9,5.15), κύριέ μου κύριε σὺ εἶ θεός (2 Sam 7,28), κύριος ὁ θεός αὐτὸς ὁ θεός (1 Kgs 18,39), κύριος αὐτὸς ἐστιν ὁ θεός (Ps 99,3), θεὸς θεῶν κύριος (Ps 49,1), θεὸς μέγας κύριος καὶ βασιλεὺς μέγας (Ps 94,3), κύριε ὁ θεός ὁ βασιλεὺς (Esth 13,15), κύριε κύριε ὁ θεός (2 Macc 1,24), κύριος ὁ δεσπότης (Isa 1,24) and δέσποτα ὁ θεός (Sir 36,1). Cf. *Dominus Deus* (4 Ezra 2,3.48; 15,21; 16,8).

These examples from Philo's writings may shed some light on how the author of Revelation came to use the title 'Lord and God'. In Philo's case, 'Lord and God' was considered a variant of 'Lord God' and was formed by inserting καί between the two titles⁽⁷⁶⁾. So, like Philo, John may have supplied a conjunction to a title that did not originally have one (from 'Lord God' in Rev 4,8 to 'Lord and God' in Rev 4,11). Alternatively, he may have been influenced by a title in the MT or LXX in which the conjunction already stood between the two titles (e.g. Dan 2,47 and Ps 35,23). Either way, John would not have been out of step with Jewish usage of divine nomenclature by using 'Lord and God' in Rev 4,11.

Within this section, we have demonstrated that '[our] Lord and God' is a traditional title for God in the LXX and in Judaism in general (e.g. Philo) prior to the time of Domitian. Six 'approximate parallels' were located, thus demonstrating the possibility of an origin for the title 'Lord and God', used in Rev 4,11, in the LXX. The final discovery was that, contrary to what some claimed, Jewish authors sometimes actually inserted καί between 'Lord God' and seemed to regard 'Lord God' and 'Lord and God' as interchangeable titles.

3. Usage of 'Our Lord and God' in the New Testament

The quest for a parallel to 'Lord and God' in the New Testament is similar to that encountered in the LXX. The precise phrase ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν only appears in Rev 4,11 in the NT. However, two similar constructions do appear. The first 'approximate parallel' is found in Thomas' address to the risen Christ in John 20,28 (ὁ κύριος μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου). Several commentators have noted the similarity of this title to the language used of Domitian⁽⁷⁷⁾,

⁽⁷⁶⁾ Xenophanes seems to use a similar technique when interpreting Moses. He seems to be paraphrasing Exod 20,4-5, which used the title κύριος ὁ θεός σου. He writes, 'He (Moses) did not make any kind of picture of gods, as he did not believe that God was in human form; rather, the heaven, which surrounds the earth, was alone God and Lord of all [θεὸν καὶ τῶν ὅλων κύριον]'. If I have correctly identified the passage he is discussing, he has inserted καί between 'Lord' and 'God'. For this text and translation see M. HENGEL, *Judaism and Hellenism* (Philadelphia 1974) I, 256.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ R. BULTMANN, *The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia 1971) 695, n. 2; R.E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John* (AncB 29; New York 1970) II, 1047; B. LINDARS, *The Gospel of John*, (NCBC; Grand Rapids 1986) 615. G.R.

yet they rarely suggest that a comparison with Domitian was intended⁽⁷⁸⁾. For example, R. Brown writes:

The combination of the titles 'Lord' and 'God' appears in pagan religious literature and is represented in the '*Dominus et Deus noster*' affected by the Emperor Domitian (A.D. 81-96; see Suetonius, *Domitian*, 13), who was probably the reigning emperor when the Gospel was being written and against whose pretensions the Book of Revelation was directed. Nevertheless, there is scholarly agreement that John's source for the titles is biblical, combining the terms used by LXX to translate YHWH (= *kyrios*) and Elohim (= *theos*)⁽⁷⁹⁾.

Likewise, Lindars writes, 'Thomas' confession is not so much a counterblast to the conceit of the Roman emperor as a summary of the Gospel as a whole'⁽⁸⁰⁾. The dismissal of any intentional allusion to the imperial cult by these scholars seems sound for several reasons. From a theological perspective, John begins his work with the statement 'the word was God' (John 1,1) and ends with the confession of Jesus as 'my Lord and my God' (20,28). From a stylistic perspective, the title 'my Lord and my God' has an affinity to other statements in the gospel (i.e. title + *καί* + title), such as 'teacher and lord' (13,13), 'lord and teacher' (13,14), and 'my father and your father, and my God and your God' (20,17). From a contextual perspective, nothing suggests an intentional comparison of Jesus with the emperor. Consequently, many scholars regard the LXX as the source of the title 'my Lord and my God' in this passage⁽⁸¹⁾.

Beasley-Murray, an advocate of finding an allusion to *dominus et deus noster* in Rev 4,11, when commenting on Jn 20,28 states that, 'The Christian use of *kyrios* naturally did not arise through the clash of loyalties to Christ and Caesar, but it was firmly set over against the claims of Caesar', BEASLEY-MURRAY, *John* (WBC 36; Waco 1987) 391. However, elsewhere he locates the Christian title 'lord and god' within this conflict between loyalty to Christ or Caesar (ID., *Revelation*, 38, 119, 209).

⁽⁷⁸⁾ C.J. HEMER, *The letters to the seven churches of Asia in their setting* (JSNTSS 11; Sheffield 1986) 86-87, an exception to this statement, writes, 'It is well known that Domitian required to be addressed as *dominus et deus* (Suetonius, *Dom.* 13; Martial, *Epig.* 9.56.3), a title corresponding to that applied to Jesus in Thomas' confession (John 20.28)'.

⁽⁷⁹⁾ BROWN, *John*, II, 1047.

⁽⁸⁰⁾ LINDARS, *The Gospel of John*, 616.

⁽⁸¹⁾ DEISSMANN, *Light*, 361, comments on the title as used in John 20,28, 'In Christian worship it was probably a direct suggestion from the Septuagint'; LINDARS, *The Gospel of John*, 615; BROWN, *John*, II, 1047; O. CULLMANN, *The Christology of the New Testament* (NTLi; London 1967) 308, n. 2;

The second 'approximate parallel' appears in 1 Cor 8,5: ὥσπερ εἰσὶν θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοί. Paul may have had in mind here Greco-Roman pagan deities⁽⁸²⁾ or, as Winter argues, the emperors, both living and dead⁽⁸³⁾. If a reference to the emperor was intended, then this is yet another example of the imperial usage of 'lord and god' prior to the time of Domitian.

This passage also supports the theory that 'Lord and God' is a variant of 'Lord God'. The language of 1 Cor 8,4-5 is based on the *Shema* ⁽⁸⁴⁾. Paul alluded to the *Shema* by use of the phrase 'there is no God but one' (1 Cor 8,4; Deut 6,4; cf. 4,35.39). The title κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν in the *Shema* (Deut 6,4.5) seems to have prompted Paul to discuss Gentile 'lords' and 'gods' (1 Cor 8,5). Thus, it appears Paul inserted καὶ between the words in the title 'Lord God' and, by implication, indicates that this phrase was interchangeable with 'Lord and God'.

The New Testament yielded two 'approximate parallels' to the phrase 'our Lord and God'. Both of these seem to have been based on the LXX. So then, in seeking the origin of the Christian use of 'Lord and God', a Jewish source is as likely as one based on the language of the Roman imperial cult. The parallel from 1 Cor 8 also predates the title used of Domitian by several decades. Thus, the title in Rev 4,11 may likewise derive from the LXX and predate the time of Domitian.

4. *Dominus et Deus and Revelation 13*

Imperial worship certainly serves as the religious and political backdrop for Rev 13 (13, 4.8.12.15). The beast from the sea is generally regarded as Rome, whereas the seven heads of the beast

⁽⁸²⁾ CULLMANN, *Christology*, 197; F.F. BRUCE, *I & II Corinthians* (NCBC; Grand Rapids 1986) 80; G. FEE, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids 1987) 373; G. O'COLLINS, *Christology* (New York 1995) 139.

⁽⁸³⁾ B.W. WINTER, "The Achaean Federal Imperial Cult II: The Corinthian Church", *TynB* 46/1 (1995) 174-175. Also A. FEUILLET, "La profession de foi monothéiste de 1 Cor. viii,4-6", *SBFLA* 13 (1962-1963) 7-32. The opinion of F.F. BRUCE, *I & II Corinthians*, 80, that Jesus could not be contrasted to the emperor at this early date is unfounded. AUNE, "Influence of Roman Imperial Court Ceremonial", 22, argues that such comparisons had probably been made from the dawn of Christianity.

⁽⁸⁴⁾ BRUCE, *I & II Corinthians*, 80; O'COLLINS, *Christology*, 137; N.T. WRIGHT, *What Saint Paul Really Said* (Grand Rapids 1997) 66.

(13,1) are specifically identified with seven hills and seven kings later in Rev 17,9.10⁽⁸⁵⁾.

The exact time of and historical personalities involved in this conflict, however, are subject to debate. Several writers believe that the events in this chapter can be pinpointed to the time of Domitian's persecutions by means of connecting his title 'lord and god', supposedly mentioned in Rev 4,11, to the situation reflected in Rev 13. H.-J. Klauck specifically links the title in Rev 4,11 with chap. 13. He writes:

Für die Lästernamen auf den Köpfen in 13,1 darf man daran erinnern, daß Domitian mit *dominus et deus* angeredet wurde. Diese Titulierung als "Herr und Gott" gebraucht Offb 4,11 exklusiv für Gott im Himmel⁽⁸⁶⁾.

W. Schrage writes:

It is therefore no accident that under the emperor Domitian, who claimed divine honors as "Lord and God" (*dominus ac deus*) during his own lifetime, a bloody persecution based on religious grounds erupted for the first time because there was opposition to the empire and its emperor. It is against this background that we must understand Revelation, and especially chapter 13⁽⁸⁷⁾.

The connection between the title 'Lord and God' and chap. 13 is tenuous at best. The primary difficulty with this view is that the title 'lord and god' does not appear in chap. 13. In fact, no titles appear at all. Instead, a blasphemous name (ὄνόμα) or names (ὀνόματα) are mentioned, according to which textual variant proves to be correct (13,1). In either case, the name(s) cannot be proven to refer to the title *dominus et deus noster* in particular. If the plural variant 'names' is the correct reading, then more than one divine title or claim would be implied (e.g. 'lord', 'god', 'lord and god', 'son of god', or 'savior'). If the singular variant 'name' is correct, as is most likely the case, then the same divine title (e.g. Sebastoi) or a general claim to divinity would have to be associated with all of the imperial heads of the beast. The safest course is simply to acknowledge that the blasphemous name represents the accepting or making of some sort of divine claim on the part of all the emperors.

⁽⁸⁵⁾ In other texts, Rome is presented as a multi-headed creature. The heads may represent the Senate (*Syb. Or.* 3.175-176) or Roman emperors (4 Ezra 12,11 and 14).

⁽⁸⁶⁾ KLAUCK, "Das Sendschreiben nach Pergamon", 172.

⁽⁸⁷⁾ W. SCHRAGE, *The Ethics of the New Testament* (Philadelphia 1988) 343. In all fairness, Schrage, unlike Klauck, does not associate *dominus et deus* with Rev 4,11.

Some commentators detect a growing intensity in the divine claims of the beast's blasphemous heads, a growth culminating in Domitian's title. Beasley-Murray writes:

The *blasphemous name* on each head alludes to the titles which were applied to the emperors increasingly through the first century CE. These included God and Son of God, and culminated in the desire of Domitian to be addressed as *Dominus et Deus*, 'Lord and God' ⁽⁸⁸⁾.

He later writes:

Augustus had no desire to pose as a god, and Tiberius severely checked the new cult. Their successors were less modest, especially the mad Caligula and Claudius who followed him. None, however, exploited the cult to such a degree as Domitian, who arrogated to himself the title *Dominus et Deus noster*, 'our Lord and God' ⁽⁸⁹⁾.

Mounce takes a similar position, 'The names of blasphemy upon the seven heads reflect the increasing tendency of the Roman emperors to assume titles of divinity' ⁽⁹⁰⁾. His final example is of Domitian's use of the divine title *Dominus et Deus noster* ⁽⁹¹⁾.

Contrary to the interpretation of Beasley-Murray and Mounce, Rev 13 does not support a progression in the magnitude of divine claims. Although each head of the beast bore a blasphemous name, there is no indication of incremental growth in the severity of the name on each of the seven heads. Even in chap. 17, where a linear progression of kings can be verified ('Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come' [17,10]), there is no indication these emperors had grown progressively evil. Furthermore, it is difficult to see how the title 'lord and god' could be the culmination of divine claims since it was used of Augustus, and perhaps Nero, before Domitian's time. This interpretation not only fails at the level of textual interpretation, but it is at least questionable from a historical perspective, for several contemporary scholars argue that Domitian did not make more grandiose claims to divinity than the emperors that went before or after him ⁽⁹²⁾.

⁽⁸⁸⁾ BEASLEY-MURRAY, *Revelation*, 209.

⁽⁸⁹⁾ *Ibid.*, 217.

⁽⁹⁰⁾ MOUNCE, *Revelation*, 250.

⁽⁹¹⁾ *Ibid.*, 250-251.

⁽⁹²⁾ THOMPSON, *Book of Revelation*, 95-115; AUNE, *Revelation*, I, 311. D. MAGIE, *Roman rule in Asia Minor to the end of the Third Century after Christ* (Princeton 1950) I, 577, writes:

There is little evidence of cruelty on the part of Domitian or even of exaggerated pretensions of grandeur. In the East, to be sure, the appella-

5. Imperial Context of Chapter 4

Some scholars have suggested that symbolism and language of the throne-room vision in Rev 4–5 was partially influenced by the ceremony of the Roman imperial court⁽⁹³⁾. Most of these scholars give due attention to both Roman imperial and Jewish imagery, but tend to place the title 'our Lord and God' into the former category.

The most important of these studies to date is that of D. Aune. His article challenged the widely held view that the heavenly liturgy portrayed in the throne-room was a projection of Christian worship in Asia Minor during the first century. He proposed instead that the liturgy was based primarily on Roman imperial court ceremonial. Pate makes an excellent summary of Aune's article:

As David Aune has shown, Revelation 5–6 also draws on the imperial ceremonial court. The following points of contact with that milieu emerge in the symbolism of chapters 4–5. (a) Greco-Roman kings were considered to be divine, their courtrooms often artistically expressed in terms of being cosmic, which itself was portrayed in concentric circles. (b) Their attendants were often associated with astrology (seven planetary spheres [cf. Rev. 4:5], twenty-four [the doubling of the twelve signs of the Zodiac] devotees [cf. 4:4, 10; 5:6-10]). (c) These attendants sang hymns of worship to the divine king (cf. 4:8-11; 5:9-14). (d) The king dispensed justice over his empire, symbolized by a scroll (cf. 5:1-8). These considerations, along with the competing claims for the respective deities throughout Revelation between John and the imperial cult of the first century (god, son of god, lord's day, savior of the world) suggest that the two cultures clash in the imagery employed in Revelation 4–5⁽⁹⁴⁾.

tion of "God" which grated on the ears of the Romans had long since been accepted as normal. Even the fulsome title of "God invincible, Founder of the city" which was inscribed on the pedestal of the Emperor at Priene, was no more extravagant than those given to many of his predecessors.

Domitian's divine claims would have been a shock in Rome, in that they would have violated the *gravitas* and *dignitas* of the emperor (AUNE, *Revelation*, I, 310). However, such imperial claims would not have seemed any more scandalous than usual to the Christians of Asia Minor, who had grown accustomed to hearing the living emperor called 'lord' and 'god' by their pagan neighbors and had seen the emperor receive divine honors throughout the first century CE.

⁽⁹³⁾ LILJE, *Last Book of the Bible*, 108-109; MOUNCE, *Revelation*, 140; AUNE, "Influence of Roman Imperial Court Ceremonial", 5-26; THOMPSON, *Book of Revelation*, 58.

⁽⁹⁴⁾ Pate in *Four Views*, 144.

Aune suggested that the doxology 'you are worthy Lord and God' was a Christian reaction to imperial propaganda⁽⁹⁵⁾.

I concur with Beale that, 'while there may be some plausibility to this background, it certainly takes second place behind the OT-Jewish influence ...'⁽⁹⁶⁾. Beale convincingly argues that the primary sources for John's throne room vision are Dan 7 and Ezek 1-2. The various details in Dan 7 compare well with Rev 4-5 in terms of both symbolism and chronology:

- 1) introductory vision phraseology (Dan 7,9 [cf. 7,2.6-7]; Rev 4,1);
- 2) a throne(s) set in heaven (Dan 7,9a; Rev 4,2a [cf. 4,4a]);
- 3) God sitting on a throne (Dan 7,9b; Rev 4,2b);
- 4) God's appearance on the throne (Dan 7,9c; Rev 4,3a);
- 5) fire before the throne (Dan 7,9d-10a; Rev 4,5);
- 6) heavenly servants surrounding the throne (Dan 7,10b; Rev 4,4b.6b-10; 5,8.11.14);
- 7) book(s) before the throne (Dan 7,10c; Rev 5,1-8.);
- 8) the book(s) opened (Dan 7,10d; Rev 5,2-5.9);
- 9) a divine (messianic) figure approaching God's throne to receive authority to reign forever over a kingdom (Dan 7,13-14a; Rev 5,5b-7.9a.12-13);
- 10) the kingdom's scope: 'all peoples, nations, and tongues' (Dan 7,14a [MT]; Rev 5,9b);
- 11) the seer's emotional distress on account of the vision (Dan 7,15; Rev 5,4);
- 12) the seer's reception of heavenly counsel concerning the vision from one of the heavenly throne servants (Dan 7,16; Rev 5,5a);
- 13) The saints given divine authority to reign over a kingdom (Dan 7,18.22.27a; Rev 5,10);
- 14) Concluding mention of God's eternal reign (Dan 7,27b; Rev 5,13-14)⁽⁹⁷⁾.

Beale also noted that the sea appears in both visions (Dan 7,2-3; Rev 4,6). Other details, not noted by Beale, are the mention of 'glory' and 'honor' (Dan 7,14; Rev 4,11; 5,12.13). Thus, one could say that the majority of the images in these chapters could just as well have been derived from the OT⁽⁹⁸⁾ as from the imperial court.

⁽⁹⁵⁾ AUNE, "Influence", 21.

⁽⁹⁶⁾ BEALE, *Revelation*, 313.

⁽⁹⁷⁾ Ibid., 315.

⁽⁹⁸⁾ The following key images within the visions of Rev 4-5 are unmistakably drawn from Jewish tradition: the rainbow (Ezek 1,28; Rev 4,3), the four living creatures (Ezek 1,5-14; Rev 4,6) who were covered with eyes (Ezek 1,18; 10,12; Rev 4,8), the seven lamps (Zech 4,2.10?; Rev 4,5), the crystal sea (Ezek 1,22; Exod 24,10; Rev 4,6), a scroll written on the front and

The arrangement of the inhabitants of the throne-room into concentric circles may take its inspiration from biblical and extra-biblical Jewish sources, rather than the Roman imperial court⁽⁹⁹⁾. Long before the time of Domitian or even the Roman empire, God had been portrayed in Jewish texts as being encircled by (Isa 6,2) or supported by four heavenly beings (Ezek 1,22.26). Furthermore, Jewish texts represent God as being frequently flanked by (1 Kgs 22,19), seated in front of (Dan 7,1; 4 Ezra 4,21), or encircled by angelic hosts (1 Enoch 71,6-8; cf. the later work, 3 Enoch 33,1-34,2). The circular arrangement of the twenty-four thrones may have been suggested by the proximity of the thrones to the Ancient of Days in Dan 7,9.

The use of cosmic symbolism in this vision of the throne-room is likely, as Aune suggests, but it seems to be based less on the Roman imperial court than on the Jewish tabernacle or temple. The throne-room of God in Revelation resembles the tabernacle and temple in several respects⁽¹⁰⁰⁾. Since the earthly tabernacle and the temple were believed to have been based on a model of heaven itself (Wis 9,8; Heb 9,23.24; Philo, *Mos.* 2.74-76,88-104; Josephus, *Bell. iud.* 212-217), cosmic imagery would be quite in line with John's throne-room vision.

Before concluding this section, two more items need to be treated due to their proximity to the phrase 'Our Lord and God' in Rev 4. The first is the acclamation, 'you are worthy' (Rev 4,11), which some have associated with the opening phrase *vere dignus* used to greet an emperor in triumphal procession⁽¹⁰¹⁾. Although the phrase could be understood in an imperial context in Rev 4-5 (4,11; 5,2.4.9.12), it does not serve as an imperial acclamation in other

back (Ezek 2,9-10; Rev 5,1), the trisagion (Isa 6,3; Rev 4,8), and the title 'Lord God Almighty' (Amos 3,13; 4,13; Rev, 4,8).

⁽⁹⁹⁾ In Revelation, the throne of God stands in the center of the throne-room (Rev 4,2) and is surrounded by the concentric circle of the rainbow (4,3), the four living creatures (4,6), the thrones of the twenty-four elders (4,4), and the angelic hosts (5,11; 7,11).

⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Revelation employs a great deal of temple imagery: the temple (Rev 11,19; 15,5.8), the tabernacle (15,5), the ark of covenant (11,19), lamps (Exod 27,21; 1 Kgs 7,49), cherubim (4,6-8), the altar of incense (6,9; 8,3), incense (5,8), bowls (5,8; 15,7; 16,1; Exod 25,29), trumpets (15,2), harps (5,8; 14,2; 15,2; cf. 18,22), golden censers (8,3), and priests (1,6; 5,10; 20,6). The setting of the trisagion in Isa 6,3 is the temple (Rev 4,8).

⁽¹⁰¹⁾ LILJE, *Last Book of the Bible*, 108; MOUNCE, *Revelation*, 140.

contexts (Rev 3,4; 16,6). Furthermore, God is proclaimed 'worthy' of praise because he is the creator (Rev 4,11), which is quite in line with Jewish thought (e.g. Dan 4,37 [LXX]; Ps 145,1.6 [LXX]; Rev 14,7). This item does not fit well as part of an imperial parody, for Roman emperors would not have taken credit for the creation of the cosmos.

The second matter is that the wording of the hymns in Revelation resembles that of imperial hymns. These hymns employ the following terminology: 'salvation', 'holy', 'glory', 'authority', 'worthy to receive power', 'righteous are your judgments', and divine titles such as 'our lord and god' ⁽¹⁰²⁾. Such nomenclature is quite similar to that found in Rev 4,11, where God is said to be worthy of 'glory', 'honor', and 'power'. However, a Jewish milieu may be just as likely. In 1 Chr 29,11, God is praised for his attributes of 'power', 'glory', 'majesty', and 'splendor'. In Dan 2,37, Nebuchadnezzar praised God for 'dominion', 'power', 'might', and 'glory'. In 1 Enoch 84,2-3, God is praised for his 'authority', 'kingdom', and 'dominion'. In Dan 4,34.36 (Theod.), 'power' and 'honor' are mentioned, while 'glory' is mentioned in Dan 4,35.36 (LXX) ⁽¹⁰³⁾. Even in Dan 7, which serves partially as the backdrop for Rev 4-5, the Son of Man is given 'authority', 'glory', and 'power' by the Ancient of Days (Dan 7,14).

Thus, a case can be made that this passage portrays God in a traditional Jewish throne-room/temple scene. He is surrounded by four living beings, angelic hosts, and thrones. His subjects deem him worthy to receive honors, just as they do in several OT passages, and he is praised for his creative power (something that would never be attributed to an emperor). He is addressed by a divine title 'Lord and God', which occurs six times in the LXX. Thus, the title fits into a Jewish milieu as well or better than a Roman imperial one.

*
* *

The title 'Our Lord and God' in Rev 4,11 could just as well derive from traditional titles for God found in the OT as from the language of the Roman imperial court and cult. Several lines of evidence converge to suggest that the title does not serve as a parody of the divine honors given Domitian or any other emperor. First, even if the nomenclature could be isolated to the Roman imperial

⁽¹⁰²⁾ AUNE, *Revelation*, I, 317.

⁽¹⁰³⁾ BEALE, *Revelation*, 336.

court, it would be difficult to narrow its usage to Domitian. The combined title ‘lord and god’ is attested in Greco-Roman religious texts in connection with Hellenistic and Roman rulers prior to the time of Domitian and the separate titles ‘lord’ and ‘god’ were used to refer to all first-century emperors. Second, contrary to what several writers asserted, the title ‘Lord and God’ does appear as a traditional title for God in the LXX (and Philo). Eight ‘approximate parallels’ to the title ‘lord and god’ were located in both the Old and New Testaments. Many scholars believe that the language of the LXX influenced these NT titles, so a case can be made that the title in Rev 4,11 also has an origin in the LXX. Third, no evidence was discovered that would identify the title ‘lord and god’ as a counter-claim to the ‘blasphemous name’ of the beast in Rev 13 and thereby set the events in this chapter within Domitian’s reign. Fourth, the evidence for setting the throne-room vision in Rev 4–5, along with the title ‘lord and god’, within the context of the imperial ceremonial court is unconvincing, for most of the elements can be accounted for within the Jewish world of ideas. Consequently, the title ‘Our Lord and God’ is of no value in determining the date for the composition of Revelation. The argument concerning the date must be settled on other grounds.

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SUMMARY

This article challenges a commonly-held belief that the title ‘our Lord and God’ (Rev 4,11) served as a Christian counter-blast to the claim of the emperor Domitian to be *dominus et deus noster*. Despite the claims of several scholars that the title ‘our Lord and God’ does not appear in the OT, the data collected favors the view that the title in Rev 4,11 does indeed have its origin in the divine title ‘Lord and God’ found in the LXX and other Jewish sources. Consequently, the title is of no use in helping to determine the date of the book of Revelation.

ANIMADVERSIONES

La prosopopée, les pseudo-citations et la vocation d'Isaïe (Is 6,9-10)

Dans le chapitre 6 du livre d'Isaïe, le prophète raconte l'expérience de sa vocation. Le Seigneur s'est révélé à lui; un séraphin a enlevé son péché; et quand il s'est déclaré prêt à devenir l'envoyé de Dieu, il reçoit la mission suivante:

Il dit: «Va, tu diras à ce peuple: Écoutez bien, mais sans comprendre, regardez bien, mais sans reconnaître. Engourdis le cœur de ce peuple, appesantis ses oreilles, colle-lui les yeux! Que de ses yeux il ne voie pas, ni n'entende de ses oreilles! Que son cœur ne comprenne pas! Qu'il ne puisse se convertir et être guéri!» (Is 6,9-10 [TOB]).

Étonnant discours que celui qui est mis ici dans la bouche du Seigneur. Le message dont est chargé le prophète est paradoxal (v. 9), et la définition de sa tâche semble exprimer l'opposé de ce qui caractérise le ministère prophétique (v. 10); par surcroît, les deux versets se contredisent: si Isaïe devait appesantir les oreilles du peuple, il ne fallait pas qu'il lui dise d'écouter, même si c'était écouter sans comprendre. Comment le Seigneur, à ce moment-là dans le déroulement de l'histoire racontée, a-t-il pu tenir ces propos? Dans son contexte narratif, le discours divin paraît absurde.

Devant ce texte difficile, plusieurs exégètes ont envisagé la possibilité que les paroles attribuées au Seigneur en Is 6,9-10 ne relatent pas ce que le prophète avait réellement entendu au cours de sa vision dans le temple⁽¹⁾, mais traduisent une interprétation de sa vocation apportée *a posteriori*. Au lieu de restituer les paroles divines telles qu'elles avaient été dites à ce moment-là, Isaïe opère une «rétroprojection» du vrai sens de son envoi tel qu'il l'a découvert au cours d'une longue et difficile expérience. Dans l'exégèse contemporaine, on tend de plus en plus à reconnaître aux paroles dites à Isaïe dans le cadre de sa vocation ce caractère fictif⁽²⁾.

Mais la thèse de la rétroprojection, malgré son attrait évident, rencontre

(1) La notion de «réalité» envisagée ici est la réalité du récit, le monde créé ou recréé par la narration. En un sens, toute narration est fictive car résultant d'un agencement subjectif de la part de l'auteur.

(2) Cf., par exemple, J. BARTHEL, *Prophetenwort und Geschichte. Die Jesajaüberlieferung in Jes 6-8 und 28-31* (FAT 19; Tübingen 1997) 92-93; E. BLUM, «Jesajas prophetisches Testament. Beobachtungen zu Jes 1-11 (Teil II)», ZAW 109 (1997) 12-29, en particulier 22-23. Selon J.-P. SONNET, «Le motif de l'endurcissement (Is 6,9-10) et la lecture d'"Isaïe"», Bib 73 (1992) 219, n. 31, le premier à avoir émis cette hypothèse serait C.P. Caspari en 1867.

également des résistances. Celles-ci se fondent essentiellement sur le fait que le texte d'Is 6,9-10 ne dit pas qu'il s'agit d'une interprétation *a posteriori*. Le texte affirme au contraire que le Seigneur a réellement prononcé les paroles consignées dans les versets 9-10.

La présente étude cherche précisément à évaluer ces paroles en tant que discours rapporté. Comme nous allons le voir, le style hébraïque connaît un emploi figuré du discours direct — c.-à-d. un emploi où les mots qui sont mis dans la bouche d'une personne n'ont de toute évidence jamais été dits par elle, mais servent à révéler une caractéristique de la personne ou de son action à un moment donné. L'emploi figuré du discours rapporté a de quoi étonner et même dérouter un lecteur moderne: les conventions stylistiques des auteurs bibliques nous sont parfois étrangères. Il se pourrait que ce soit une telle figure qu'on rencontre en Is 6,9-10. Il s'agira donc, en quelque sorte, d'explorer l'arrière-plan stylistique, et plus précisément rhétorique, du procédé que l'on a pu constater dans ces versets difficiles.

I. Les emplois figurés du discours rapporté

Le style biblique emploie le discours direct dans une grande diversité de fonctions. Quand les citations sont réelles, ce qui est généralement le cas dans la narration, elles peuvent néanmoins servir à exprimer le regard que jette l'auteur sur le personnage cité ou sur son entourage. En dehors de la narration, dans le discours didactique ou persuasif et dans la poésie, la fonction caractérisante du discours rapporté prend parfois tant d'importance que sa véracité factuelle devient secondaire. Les mots "il dit" n'impliquent pas forcément que le discours a réellement été prononcé: ce sont les cas de prosopopée ou de pseudo-citation.

1. Les citations véridiques

La citation des paroles des *dramatis personae* est l'une des caractéristiques saillantes du récit biblique. Une narration typique consiste dans la mise en scène d'un grand nombre de dialogues reliés par des passages à la troisième personne relatant les actions. Ce discours rapporté est l'un des principaux moyens dont dispose le narrateur biblique pour caractériser ses personnages. C'est à travers leurs paroles que le lecteur apprend à connaître les héros. Ce procédé va de pair avec la prédilection des auteurs bibliques pour le *showing*, le fait de montrer les personnages dans leurs actions de façon apparemment objective, aux dépens du *telling*, par lequel le narrateur dicterait au lecteur l'idée qu'il doit se faire de tel ou tel personnage ou de tel ou tel événement. Le discours rapporté au sein des récits bibliques est d'une très grande plasticité. Cependant, les conventions du récit biblique impliquent que la citation des paroles des protagonistes reste, en général, fidèle à ce qui a réellement été dit dans le monde du récit⁽³⁾.

Les seuls cas où le discours rapporté par le narrateur ne correspond

(3) Le narrateur biblique est à la fois omniscient et fiable: tout ce qu'il relate est la vérité — même si ce n'est pas toujours toute la vérité, cf. M. STERNBERG, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (ILBS; Bloomington 1987).

pas verbalement aux paroles prononcées par les personnages sont ceux où ce discours est abrégé en fonction des besoins du récit. Considérons un exemple:

Houchaï dit aux sacrificateurs Tsadoq et Abiatar: «Ahitophel a donné *tel et tel conseil* à Absalom et aux anciens d'Israël; et moi, j'ai conseillé *telle et telle chose*» (2 S 17,15).

Ici, le lecteur comprend aisément que les paroles de Houchaï ne sont pas citées textuellement, mais qu'elles doivent être complétées d'après le contexte⁽⁴⁾.

Dans la poésie et dans le genre discursif on prend une liberté beaucoup plus grande à l'égard du discours direct. On y rencontre des procédés qui n'impliquent pas la véracité des paroles citées.

2. La prosopopée

Le cas le plus simple, et le moins dépayçant, est ce qu'on appelle en rhétorique la prosopopée — figure de pensée par laquelle on fait parler et agir une personne que l'on évoque, un absent, un mort, un animal ou une chose personnifiée⁽⁵⁾. Un cas notoire se trouve en Pr 8,4-36 où un long discours est mis dans la bouche de la Sagesse. Il s'agit évidemment d'une figure poétique à travers laquelle l'auteur exprime, d'une façon imagée, les idées qu'il veut transmettre sur la sagesse et sur sa place dans le monde.

Des exemples plus brefs se rencontrent dans le livre de Job, p. ex., «L'Abîme déclare: '*Elle* (i.e. la sagesse) *n'est pas en moi*' et l'Océan: '*Elle ne se trouve pas chez moi*'» (Jb 28,14); «Le gouffre et la mort déclarent: '*Nos oreilles ont eu vent de sa renommée*'» (v. 22). Ici, le caractère inanimé de ce qu'on fait parler montre sans équivoque qu'il ne s'agit pas d'un discours réellement dit ou entendu.

Le cas n'est pas réellement différent dans les passages où l'on met en scène une personne imaginaire représentant un type de comportement. «L'insensé dit en son cœur: '*Il n'y a point de Dieu!*'» (Ps 14,1 [Colombe]). «L'œil de l'adultère épie le crépuscule. '*Nul ne me verra*', dit-il et il se met un masque» (Jb 23,15 [TOB]). Dans ces exemples, le discours sert d'avantage à caractériser un comportement qu'à rapporter des paroles qui ont réellement été dites. Notons encore un passage où le discours rapporté révèle, plus clairement que dans les cas déjà cités, qu'il ne peut s'agir de paroles réellement prononcées:

Que le Seigneur coupe toutes ces lèvres flatteuses et la langue arrogante de ceux qui disent: «*Par notre langue nous vaincrons; nos lèvres sont avec nous; qui sera notre maître?*» (Ps 12,5 [TOB]).

Il est difficile d'imaginer le genre de personne qui aurait tenu ce discours étrange, ou d'envisager une situation qui l'aurait provoqué.

⁽⁴⁾ Pour d'autres exemples du même genre, cf. STERNBERG, *Poetics*, 120, 385.

⁽⁵⁾ Cf. E. KÖNIG, *Stylistik, Rhetorik, Poetik* (Leipzig 1900) 106. König inclut ici toutes sortes de personnifications, même celles qui n'impliquent pas un discours.

Manifestement, il ne s'agit pas de paroles dites ou entendues un jour, mais d'un discours imaginaire par lequel le psalmiste décrit l'attitude d'un certain type de personnage⁽⁶⁾.

Ce qui est commun à tous ces exemples, c'est que le discours rapporté ne vise pas à restituer des paroles mais à caractériser un être, un comportement ou une action. Les mots «il dit» fonctionnent en quelque sorte comme un trope signifiant à peu près «c'est comme s'il disait» ou «il exprime par ses actions ou par sa façon d'être»⁽⁷⁾.

3. Les pseudo-citations

Si les exemples énumérés ci-dessus sont tout à fait représentatifs du style biblique, ils restent cependant accessibles pour un lecteur moderne. Les contextes poétiques et proverbiaux facilitent la perception du caractère figuré des expressions en question. On trouve des exemples analogues dans le genre oratoire. En Jg 9,8-15, Jotham met en scène les arbres qui se parlent, et en 2 S 17,9, Houchaï évoque dans son plaidoyer un homme d'Israël qui dira ce qu'il dira en cas de défaite pour Absalom.

Le cas est différent quand le discours rapporté n'est ni attribué à un être inanimé, ni localisé dans l'avenir, ni défini comme une prosopopée d'une autre manière. Deux exemples frappants se trouvent dans les livres de Samuel. En 1 S 26,18-20, David plaide devant Saül pour que celui-ci abandonne sa poursuite. Dans ce contexte, David envisage des hommes qui ont pu inciter Saül contre lui:

Qu'ils soient maudits devant le Seigneur pour m'avoir chassé aujourd'hui et coupé de l'héritage du Seigneur en me disant: «*Va servir d'autres dieux*» (1 S 26,19b [TOB]).

Le discours que David attribue à ses adversaires éventuels renoue avec l'idée populaire d'après laquelle on ne peut servir le Dieu d'Israël en dehors du pays⁽⁸⁾. Du point de vue du fond il n'y pas de réelle difficulté de compréhension. Il subsiste cependant un problème formel. On a de la peine à imaginer les paroles «*Va servir d'autres dieux*» dans la bouche des ennemis de David. Ce discours est adressé directement à David au moyen de la deuxième personne, alors que les locuteurs sont forcément des gens de l'entourage de Saül et on ne comprend guère comment ils ont pu se trouver face à face avec David. De plus, on voit mal d'où viendrait l'intérêt de ces conseillers du trône pour le sort spirituel ou culturel de David. On ne se trompera donc pas en supposant qu'il ne s'agit pas d'un discours réel mais

⁽⁶⁾ Autres exemples: Ps 10,11; 12,5; 64,6; 73,11.

⁽⁷⁾ Il arrive qu'une expression du type «il dit X» se fige et prenne un sens stéréotypé. Ainsi *ʾamar hōn*, «il dit 'Assez'», signifie approximativement «il est satisfait»: «Trois choses sont insatiables, quatre ne disent pas: 'Assez!'» (Pr 30,15); et *ʾamar he'ah*, «il dit 'Aha'», pourrait se traduire «il se gonfle d'enthousiasme»: «A chaque coup de trompette il [le cheval] dit: 'Aha!'» (Jb 39,25). Pour d'autres exemples bibliques et sémitiques, cf. G. GOLDENBERG, «On Direct Speech and the Hebrew Bible», *Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic Syntax* (FS. J. Hoftijzer; [eds. K. JONGELING e. a.] SSLL 17; Leiden 1991) 79-96, en particulier 89-91.

⁽⁸⁾ Cf., par exemple, Am 7,17; Os 9,3-4; 2 R 5,17.

d'un discours fictif, et déclaré comme tel, qui exprime le point de vue de David sur le comportement des personnes envisagées⁽⁹⁾. La traduction de la Colombe a bien capté cette nuance: «... ils me chassent aujourd'hui pour me détacher de l'héritage de l'Éternel (*ce qui revient*) à dire: Va rendre un culte à d'autres dieux!» Il s'agit non pas d'une citation, même imaginaire, mais d'une pseudo-citation qui sert en réalité à caractériser un certain comportement. Comme dans les cas de prosopopée parcourus ci-dessus, le discours rapporté fonctionne comme une figure de style.

Pourtant, le locuteur prétendu du discours ne représente pas ici un personnage typique. Il s'agit de personnes bien précises, quoique anonymes. En outre, le discours lui-même n'est pas, comme dans les autres cas, d'ordre général, de tout temps et de tout lieu. Il s'agit d'une phrase très particulière, adressée à une personne précise dans une situation concrète. Ce sont ces dernières propriétés qui font que le procédé nécessite un commentaire. On se trouve en présence d'une figure rhétorique qui n'est pas habituelle dans la littérature occidentale.

Le deuxième exemple se trouve en 2 S 14. Une femme tequoise embauchée par Joab dans l'intention de réconcilier David avec son fils Absalom raconte au roi une histoire, inventée de toutes pièces mais — c'est la condition du succès de l'entreprise — tout à fait vraisemblable:

Hélas! Je suis veuve. Mon mari est mort. Ta servante avait deux fils. Tous les deux, ils se sont querellés dans la campagne. Il n'y avait personne pour les séparer. L'un d'eux a porté un coup mortel à son frère. Alors tout le clan s'est dressé contre ta servante. Ils ont dit: «Livrez le fraticide: nous le mettrons à mort pour prix de la vie de son frère qu'il a assassiné — *et nous supprimerons du même coup l'héritier*». (2 S 14,5-7 [TOB])

Comme le constatent les commentaires, il est difficile d'accepter que les dernières paroles attribuées au clan correspondent d'une façon ou d'une autre à ce qui a réellement été dit (dans le monde de la fiction élaborée par la veuve). La veuve avait certes un intérêt à noircir sa parenté, mais pas au point de rendre son récit incroyable. On a donc parfois proposé de changer le texte hébreu et de lire וְהִשְׁמִידוּ, «et ils supprimeront», au lieu de וְנִשְׁמִידָה, «et nous supprimerons»⁽¹⁰⁾. Mais la conjecture est superflue si l'on

⁽⁹⁾ Ceci a été bien perçu par David Kimchi qui glose, dans son commentaire (cf. *Miqra'ot Gedolot*), «c'est comme s'il lui disait: 'Va rendre un culte...'». De même Calvin déclare: «*Nae Davidis hostes certum est ipsis verbis non uti solitos, sed David factum potius quam verba attendi*» (En effet, il est certain que les ennemis de David ne disaient pas cela textuellement, mais David fait référence à leurs actes plutôt qu'à leurs paroles); cf. Ioannis CALVINI *Opera quae supersunt omnia* (éd. G. BAUM – E. CUNITZ – E. REUSS) (Brunsvigae 1886) XXX, col. 596-597.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Cf. P. JOÛON, «Notes philologiques sur le texte hébreu de 2 Samuel», *Bib* 9 (1928) 302-315, en particulier 310-311. Joûon argumente cette conjecture avec un renvoi à la Peshitta où l'on trouve effectivement la troisième personne et en invoquant le caractère étrange du texte: «et nous voulons anéantir jusqu'à l'héritier' est étrange dans la bouche de la parenté. Même à supposer qu'en réclamant la mort du meurtrier 'tout le clan' vise à l'héritage, il est peu vraisemblable qu'il ait manifesté ce dessein à la mère».

suppose qu'il s'agit, pour la dernière phrase du discours rapporté par la veuve, d'une pseudo-citation n'exprimant pas des paroles réellement dites, mais la motivation cachée du clan telle qu'elle est perçue par la veuve. Comme en 1 S 26,19 il s'agit d'une figure de style déclarée, d'un discours au sens figuré caractérisant en réalité un comportement humain. Compris ainsi, ces derniers mots du discours rapporté entrent tout à fait dans la stratégie rhétorique de la veuve.

Comme en 1 S 26,19, le caractère fictif de la citation en 2 S 14,7 n'est pas évident pour un lecteur moderne. Il s'agit d'un discours concret attribué à un groupe de personnes particulières dans le cadre d'un récit factuel. Ce qui est déroutant pour nous devait cependant être toléré, voire apprécié, dans le milieu producteur de la Bible.

4. Le «discours figuré» dans les prophètes

La pseudo-citation, qui se trouvait à l'état brut dans le style populaire, a été élevée en forme artistique par ces maîtres de la rhétorique que sont les prophètes. Dans une étude sur les citations chez les prophètes, Hans Walter Wolff avait consacré quelques pages aux citations fictives⁽¹⁾. La plupart des citations que l'on trouve chez les prophètes pourraient être fictives⁽²⁾, mais il est parfois difficile de distinguer les citations vraies des citations feintes. Wolff propose deux types de critères, formels et substantiels.

Au point de vue formel, une citation dans un texte prophétique se révèle imaginaire si elle s'insère de façon évidente dans son contexte, par exemple en empruntant une terminologie particulière ou des motifs typiques. Ainsi les paroles attribuées à l'Assyrie en Is 10,10-11 sont fictives du moins en partie, car on n'imagine pas que des Assyriens appliquent le mot *ʾelilim*, «néants», aux divinités des peuples vaincus. De même les paroles mises dans la bouche de l'Égypte en Jr 46 sont à l'évidence dues à la plume du prophète:

Qui donc est comme le Nil qui monte, comme de grands fleuves aux eaux bouillonnantes? C'est l'Égypte qui est comme le Nil qui monte, comme de grands fleuves aux eaux bouillonnantes. Elle disait: «*Je monterai, je submergerai la terre...*» (Jr 46,7-8 [TOB]).

Le fait que le discours rapporté enchaîne directement sur les paroles précédentes, en continuant l'image du fleuve débordant ses rives, montre qu'il ne s'agit pas d'une citation réelle mais d'une figure de style destinée à rendre plus vivante la description de l'Égypte.

Au point de vue substantiel, une citation s'avère fictive quand elle rend manifeste le jugement prophétique. Un exemple éclairant se trouve en Is 28. Isaïe s'en prend aux hommes politiques qui espèrent, au prix de démarches diplomatiques, échapper à la menace assyrienne. Pour mieux les réfuter, il prétend leur donner la parole:

⁽¹⁾ Cf. H.W. WOLFF, «Das Zitat im Prophetenspruch. Eine Studie zur prophetischen Verkündigungsweise», IDEM, *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (TB.AT 22; München 1964) 36-129; en particulier 68-75.

⁽²⁾ Cf. WOLFF, «Das Zitat», 68.

Vous dites: «Nous avons conclu une alliance avec la Mort, nous avons fait un pacte avec le monde d'en bas. Le fléau déchaîné, quand il passera, ne nous atteindra pas, car nous nous sommes fait du mensonge un refuge et dans la duplicité nous avons notre abri» (Is 28,15 [TOB]).

Comme de nombreux commentateurs l'ont constaté, il est difficile d'imaginer que les dirigeants jérusalémites tancés par le prophète aient réellement utilisé ces termes. Même en admettant que le passage est difficile et qu'on a de la peine à identifier les démarches critiquées par le prophète, on décèle aisément que la citation est présentée de façon subjective. C'est Isaïe qui qualifie l'abri dans lequel ses adversaires cherchent un refuge de mensonge et de duplicité⁽¹³⁾. Les dirigeants eux-mêmes auraient peut-être parlé de fine diplomatie. De même au début du verset, l'«alliance avec la Mort» est manifestement une expression forgée par le prophète pour dénoncer une attitude ou une démarche, même s'il demeure difficile de déterminer quelle est la réalité qui se cache derrière cette désignation⁽¹⁴⁾. Quant au milieu du verset, les mots «le fléau déchaîné, quand il passera, ne nous atteindra pas» se rapprochent sans doute des mots ou des pensées réelles des dirigeants. Toutefois, même ici, l'évocation du danger assyrien s'inspire d'images employées ailleurs dans le livre d'Isaïe (cf. 10,26; 8,7-8).

Nous sommes assez loin, avec ce dernier exemple, des cas de pseudo-citation discutés ci-dessus. Le cas présent est plus élaboré, plus travaillé du point de vue stylistique, plus mordant par son ironie cinglante. Pourtant, à la base il s'agit du même procédé stylistique. Le discours attribué à une personne précise ne vise pas à transcrire les mots qu'elle a dits, mais sert à caractériser un comportement ou une démarche. Ce caractère métaphorique du discours, qui devait être manifeste pour l'auditoire du prophète, a de quoi dérouter un lecteur occidental.

5. *Excursus: Les citations mensongères*

Il convient de distinguer les procédés stylistiques explorés ci-dessus, qui impliquent tous un emploi «détourné» du discours rapporté, d'un autre phénomène qui consiste à mettre dans la bouche d'une personne des paroles qu'elle n'a pas tenues, en vue de déformer la vérité. Un cas très clair se rencontre en 2 S 16: le roi David, en fuite devant son fils Absalom, rencontre sur sa route Tsiba, le domestique de Mephibocheth. Quand David demande où se trouve ce dernier, Tsiba répond:

⁽¹³⁾ Cf. David Kimchi: «Ce n'est pas eux qui disaient 'mensonge' et 'duplicité', mais c'est le prophète qui appelle cela 'refuge de mensonge'».

⁽¹⁴⁾ L'interprétation classique de l'«alliance avec la Mort» consiste à y trouver une référence à l'assurance, spécieuse, des dirigeants jérusalémites face à la menace assyrienne: ils expriment ainsi leur conviction que la mort ne les touchera pas (cf. Jb 5,23). Un fort courant dans l'exégèse moderne voit dans la Mort et le monde d'en bas une figure de l'Égypte avec lequel une alliance aurait été conclue. Finalement, certains exégètes pensent qu'il s'agit littéralement d'une alliance avec la Mort, le dieu Mot connu des textes ugaritiques, mais cela est peu probable. Pour ces différentes approches, cf. le récent survol dans BARTHEL, *Prophetenwort*, 318-319.

Voici qu'il est resté à Jérusalem, car il a dit: «*Aujourd'hui, la maison d'Israël me rendra le royaume de mon père*» (2 S 16,3 [Colombe]).

Que Mephibocheth l'estropié, dernier survivant de la maison de Saül, que David avait gracieusement reçu à sa table (cf. 2 S 9), fasse preuve d'un espoir à ce point déplacé et, en même temps, d'un tel manque de loyauté envers son bienfaiteur est tout simplement incroyable. Pourtant, David y a cru. Mais l'information est fausse. En effet, dans le récit sur le retour de David, on apprend que Mephibocheth «n'avait pris soin ni de ses pieds ni de sa moustache, il n'avait pas lavé ses habits, *depuis le jour où le roi était parti*» (1 S 19,25). Cette information de la part du narrateur omniscient, qui confirme le démenti explicite de Mephibocheth (1 S 19,27), montre que le discours que Tsiba avait mis dans la bouche de son maître est une simple diffamation.

Dans un tel cas, ce qui importe n'est pas de savoir si le discours rapporté est réel ou fictif mais qu'il est mensonger. Il ne s'agit pas d'une figure de style admise dans le monde biblique, mais d'une démarche perfide qui se pratique partout où existent des humains. Si la pseudo-citation devait, pour bien fonctionner, être identifiable en tant que telle, la citation mensongère ne pouvait se couronner de succès que lorsqu'elle restait dissimulée.

6. Conclusion

Ce qu'on retiendra de ce rapide survol c'est que, outre les citations véridiques et non véridiques, il existe en hébreu biblique une «figure» culturellement acceptable où le discours rapporté prend un sens métaphorique contribuant à caractériser une personne, un comportement ou une situation. Ce procédé stylistique n'est pas limité à la poésie ou au genre sapientiel. On le trouve également dans la rhétorique naturelle mise en œuvre dans les discussions entre individus et, sous une forme plus développée, chez les prophètes. Cette convention littéraire n'est pas immédiatement accessible pour un lecteur moderne.

II. Isaïe 6,9-10: une pseudo-citation?

Wolff n'avait entrevu des cas de pseudo-citation que lorsque le locuteur présumé s'identifiait aux adversaires du prophète. Il n'est cependant pas unimaginable, du moins théoriquement, que le même procédé stylistique s'applique à Dieu. Les prophètes parlent au nom de Dieu et citent couramment ses paroles. Dans la grande majorité des cas il n'y a aucune raison de mettre en doute leur fidélité dans la transmission du discours divin. Toutefois, dans certains contextes précis il se pourrait qu'une parole attribuée à Dieu montre, par sa forme ou son contenu, qu'il s'agit non pas d'un discours au sens propre mais au sens figuré. Un tel cas se trouve, semble-t-il, en Is 6,9-10.

Il est vrai que, dans la littérature biblique, les citations fictives ne sont guère compatibles avec le genre narratif. Mais Isaïe 6 n'est pas un récit biblique ordinaire. La «narration» de la vocation d'Isaïe n'émane pas d'un auteur anonyme et omniscient, mais du prophète lui-même. L'emploi de la

première personne et la nature des faits narrés doivent nous mettre sur nos gardes par rapport à la nature subjective du récit. Le prophète mis en scène ici ne raconte pas les événements tels qu'ils se sont produits, il raconte son expérience de ces événements.

Le caractère fictif de la mission donnée à Isaïe lors de sa vocation est indiqué, d'une part, par la formulation étrange du discours divin lui-même, d'autre part, par la tension qui existe entre ce discours et la prédication d'Isaïe, consignée dans son livre.

1. *La formulation des paroles de Dieu*

Les difficultés dans la compréhension du discours divin en Is 6,9-10 ont été évoquées au début de la présente étude: pourquoi dire au peuple d'écouter s'il ne doit pas comprendre? Et pourquoi envoyer un prophète si la conversion — ou du moins la prise de conscience! — n'est pas envisagée? Si le Seigneur avait réellement adressé ces paroles à Isaïe lors de sa vocation, elles n'auraient pu faire autrement que de le plonger dans une stupeur profonde.

En désespoir de cause, on a cherché à interpréter la mission divine comme un discours ironique⁽¹⁵⁾. Si Amos a pu prophétiser: «Allez à Béthel et péchez» (Am 4,4), et si le Christ a pu dire aux Pharisiens: «Mettez donc le comble à la mesure de vos pères!» (Mt 23,32), un prophète ne pouvait-il pas transmettre le message: «Écoutez toujours mais ne comprenez rien»? On aurait affaire à une espèce d'antiphrase, dont le sens serait: «Autant ne pas vous parler, puisque de toute manière vous n'écoutez rien».

L'interprétation ironique échoue cependant quand on aborde le verset 10. L'antiphrase impliquerait d'une façon ou d'une autre un désir, désabusé certes mais réel tout de même, que le peuple écoute et comprenne. Or, le v. 10 dit précisément le contraire: «Engourdis le cœur de ce peuple... Qu'il ne puisse se convertir et être guéri». À moins de supposer qu'il s'agit une nouvelle fois d'ironie — et pourquoi Dieu ironiserait-il avec son prophète? — ce verset montre Dieu désire réellement empêcher son peuple de comprendre.

Si un texte ne peut être compris au sens obvie on y cherchera un sens figuré. S'il est difficile d'interpréter le discours adressé à Isaïe lors de sa vocation comme un discours réel, le lecteur — s'il est avisé des usages stylistiques de la Bible hébraïque — est amené à y reconnaître un discours fictif.

2. *La vocation d'Isaïe et sa prédication*

Un deuxième argument venant confirmer le caractère fictif du discours divin d'Is 6,9-10 est fourni par une tension constatée entre la mission reçue par le prophète et sa prédication telle qu'elle se présente dans le reste du livre⁽¹⁶⁾. En effet, si sa mission était d'emblée de conduire Juda à la ruine,

⁽¹⁵⁾ Cf. J.A. ALEXANDER, *Commentary on Isaiah* (New York 1867; repr. Grand Rapids 1992) 151.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Cet argument est longuement développé dans le chapitre influent de F. HESSE, *Das Verstockungsproblem im Alten Testament* (BZAW 74; Berlin 1955) 82-91.

comment expliquer les appels à la conversion? Et si le mandat reçu lors de sa vocation était d'endurcir le cœur du peuple, pourquoi Isaïe s'efforçait-il à un tel point à faire prendre conscience à son auditoire de sa déchéance et de son péché? Un exégète a entrepris le tour de force de refuser à Isaïe toute prophétie de salut et tout appel à la conversion⁽¹⁷⁾. La prédication authentique du prophète n'aurait eu qu'un seul objectif, et ce depuis le début de son ministère, à savoir l'endurcissement du cœur de ses interlocuteurs. Cette approche a été très peu suivie, même par ceux qui résistent à la thèse d'un discours fictif en Is 6,9-10. Les tensions entre la vocation du prophète et la prédication qui suit sont réelles. Elles se résolvent de façon satisfaisante grâce à la thèse de la rétroprojection. Racontant sa vocation avec du recul, le prophète ne relate pas les paroles divines telles qu'il les avait entendues jadis mais selon leur vérité profonde. L'année de la mort du roi Ozias, le Seigneur n'avait dit ni: «Va et dis à ce peuple...», ni: «Engourdis son cœur...»; mais pour le prophète, en rétrospective, c'est *comme s'il l'avait dit*.

Le langage figuré se prête toujours à plusieurs interprétations. On osera néanmoins une approximation du message exprimé par la pseudo-citation d'Is 6,9-10. Ce que le prophète veut dire c'est que la mission pour laquelle le Seigneur l'avait envoyé devait se solder par un échec (v. 9); et que cet échec correspondait à l'intention de Dieu (v. 10). Le discours ne restitue pas ce qui avait été révélé au prophète lors de sa vocation, mais ce qu'il a discerné de l'intention divine à travers un long ministère infructueux.

3. Le problème d'Is 6,11

Tout en éclairant le sens des v. 9-10, la thèse de la rétroprojection crée un problème par rapport à l'interprétation du v. 11. En réponse à la mission divine, Isaïe demande: «Jusques à quand, Seigneur?» Comment expliquer cette réaction du prophète?

Beaucoup d'exégètes souscrivant à la thèse de rétroprojection relient la question du prophète aux versets précédents⁽¹⁸⁾. Cette solution est embarrassante: si le Seigneur n'a pas — dans la réalité du récit d'Isaïe 6 — prononcé les mots relatés aux v. 9-10, comment le prophète peut-il y réagir par la question du v. 11⁽¹⁹⁾. On pourrait certes avancer que le v. 11 est également fictif, mais ce ne serait pas une explication satisfaisante. La question se comprend au début du ministère d'Isaïe, mais quelle en serait le sens dans une perspective de rétrospection? De plus, la solution reviendrait à supposer non pas une pseudo-citation, mais un pseudo-dialogue et même une pseudo-narration: en effet, certains éléments du récit même, comme «Je dis alors» (v. 11a), auraient dans ce cas le caractère d'une fiction déclarée.

On préférera donc une solution plus subtile et perspicace, proposée d'abord par Hardmeier: la question du v. 11 ne fait pas suite aux paroles

⁽¹⁷⁾ R. KILIAN, «Der Verstockungsauftrag Jesajas», *Bausteine biblischer Theologie* (FS. G.J. Botterweck; [Hrsg. H.-J. FABRY] BBB 50; Bonn 1970) 209-225.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Voir, par exemple, les études de Blum et de Barthel citées à la n. 2.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Cette objection a été entrevue très clairement par KILIAN, «Verstockungsauftrag», 213.

des v. 9-10, mais à la vocation réelle telle que le prophète l'avait reçue à l'époque⁽²⁰⁾. Autrement dit, la question du prophète réagit aux paroles réelles supplantées dans le récit d'Is 6 par la pseudo-citation des v. 9-10.

En effet, d'après la logique narrative d'Is 6, quelque chose a dû être dit au prophète après qu'il se fut déclaré prêt à être envoyé (v. 8). Dans l'agencement du récit, ces paroles réelles ont été remplacées par une pseudo-citation, parce que le prophète-narrateur considère que le sens profond de la démarche divine importait plus que les *ipsissima verba*. Mais l'envoi du prophète, tout comme sa vocation, avait certainement occasionné des paroles divines.

Quelles étaient donc ces paroles? En se fondant sur une lecture attentive des v. 1-8, Hardmeier pense qu'Isaïe avait dû recevoir la mission d'annoncer le jugement immuable de Dieu. Il est difficile d'en être sûr. Le contenu des prophéties isaïennes consignées dans le livre plaide cependant en faveur de cette thèse. Et la teneur des v. 9-10 la confirme également: tout en admettant le caractère fictif et rétrospectif du discours, on se défait difficilement de l'idée que la mission qu'Isaïe avait reçue consistait en une condamnation.

Si c'est de l'annonce du jugement que le Seigneur a chargé son prophète, on comprend bien, dans la trame du récit, la question du v. 11: «Jusques à quand» durera ta colère, Seigneur⁽²¹⁾?

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* *

Le présent article s'est efforcé de montrer que, à côté des citations réelles et des citations mensongères, il existe une autre catégorie, à savoir celle des pseudo-citations dont le but n'est pas de restituer un discours réel mais de caractériser un personnage ou un comportement donnés. L'expression «il dit: ...» prend un sens métaphorique impliquant à peu près: «par son comportement, ou par sa manière d'être, c'est comme s'il disait: ...»

Ce qui définit la pseudo-citation c'est sa subjectivité: sous les apparences d'un discours réellement prononcé par un tiers, le locuteur exprime un jugement subjectif décrivant sa propre vision du personnage ou des événements. Cette substitution du subjectif à l'objectif semble avoir été admise par les conventions littéraires régissant le style biblique. Un lecteur israélite savait sans doute la déceler dans la plupart des cas. C'est elle précisément qui rend la pseudo-citation difficilement accessible pour un lecteur occidental.

Si le point de vue élaboré dans la première partie de cette étude s'avère exact, il fournit une contribution non négligeable à l'interprétation du récit de la vocation d'Isaïe. En effet, le discours d'envoi mis dans la bouche du Seigneur en Is 6,9-10 a depuis longtemps été soupçonné d'être une pseudo-

⁽²⁰⁾ Cf. C. HARDMEIER, «Jesajas Verkündigungsabsicht und Jahwes Verstockungsauftrag in Jes 6» in *Die Botschaft und die Boten* (FS. H.W. Wolff; [Hrsg. J. JEREMIAS – L. PERLITT] Neukirchen 1981) 235-251, en particulier 248-249.

⁽²¹⁾ Cf. Jr 12,4; Za 1,12; Ps 6,4; 80,5; 90,13.

citation. La présente étude montre qu'une telle explication s'accorde avec les règles stylistiques présumées de la Bible hébraïque.

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SUMMARY

The divine mission addressed to Isaiah in Is 6,9-10 has baffled many generations of interpreters because of its paradoxical nature and its apparent inappropriateness in a prophetic calling. A possible way of understanding the passage is to suppose that the words are not an accurate report of what the Lord said, but a retrospective judgment on what Isaiah's mission really meant. The present article explores the rhetorical background of the stylistic procedure that may underlie Is 6,9-10. In Hebrew rhetoric, direct quotation does not necessarily imply that the words quoted were really said. A figure of speech exists, the 'pseudo-quotation', meaning approximately: 'by his behaviour or his way of being, it is *as if he were saying...*'.

Daniel 7,2-14: Another Look at its Mythic Pattern

The tale of Dan 7,2-14 is a strange one: in a night vision Daniel sees four terrifying beasts arise from the sea. The beasts are then described. Thrones are set and an Ancient of Days takes his place, the books are opened and the judgement begins. The fourth beast is killed and his body burnt with fire, while the rest are allowed to live for a time although their dominion is taken away. Then 'One like a Son of Man' comes 'with the clouds of heaven' and is given everlasting dominion and all peoples are to serve him. This paper aims to explore the antecedents of the mythic pattern of the vision.

Scholars have long recognised that Dan 7,2-14 has a mythological background⁽¹⁾. Gunkel, in 1895, posited that this was the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*⁽²⁾. More recent scholarship, following the lead of Bentzen⁽³⁾, prefers a Canaanite background⁽⁴⁾, although an Akkadian source has also been suggested⁽⁵⁾, amongst others⁽⁶⁾.

1. Canaanite texts

Canaanite mythological texts, hitherto discovered, while they do allude to Baal's overcoming of Yam (sea), Nahar (river) and Mot (death or sterility) do not parallel the outline of Dan 7,2-14. In the Ugaritic myth of Baal and Yam⁽⁷⁾ the sequence of events has a different order, as Ferch⁽⁸⁾ pointed out a number of years ago. J.J. Collins who continues to support the Baal and Yam myth as the background to Dan 7,2-14 warned against an argument advanced by Ferch that the overall theme of the myth must be similar for a dependence to be

(1) One dissenting voice is M. Casey who posits that mythological references were unintentional on Daniel's part, rather they were simply a feature of the Biblical passages upon which he drew; cf. M. CASEY, *Son of Man. The Interpretation and Influence of Daniel 7* (London 1979) 18.

(2) H. GUNKEL, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit. Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen 1 und Ap Joh 12* (Göttingen 1895) esp. 323-335.

(3) A. BENTZEN, *King and Messiah* (London 1955) 74-75.

(4) J.J. Collins, amongst others, is an ardent supporter of a Canaanite mythological background for Dan 7,2-14; cf. J.J. COLLINS, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* (HSM 16; Missoula 1977) 96-106, esp. 105-106; IDEM, *Daniel. A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis 1993) 286-294; IDEM, "Stirring up the Great Sea The Religio-Historical Background of Daniel 7", *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings* (ed. A.S. VAN DER WOUDE) (BETL 106; Leuven 1993) 121-136.

(5) The Vision of the Netherworld, an Akkadian dream vision, dated about the seventh century B.C., has been suggested as the prototype for Dan 7,2-14 by H.S. KVANVIG, "An Akkadian Vision as Background for Daniel 7", *StTh* 35 [1981] 85-89; IDEM, *Roots of Apocalyptic. The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and the Son of Man* (WMANT 61; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1988) 345-555.

(6) Other suggestions relate to the origin of the Son of Man imagery. For a summary and critique thereof cf. J.J. COLLINS, *Daniel*, 282-283.

(7) The translation used in this essay follows J.C.L. GIBSON, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (Edinburgh 1977) 37-45; for the sake of convenience references to KTU have been added.

(8) A.J. FERCH, "Daniel 7 and Ugarit: A Reconsideration", *JBL* 99 (1980) 75-86.

adduced⁽⁹⁾. Further, he pointed out that each culture adapted earlier myths to fit their own understanding of their situation, a point with which the present writer concurs. Nevertheless in the present case, not only is the main theme of the Baal myth one of rivalry, provoked by jealousy between two gods, there are few details in the myth which find a reflection in Dan 7,2-14: there is no mention of the winds of heaven bringing about the ensuing situation⁽¹⁰⁾ nor of beasts of any kind emerging from, or being part of, the sea. Neither is there mention of such beasts being allowed to survive although their dominion is taken away, nor is Yam, Baal's adversary killed by fire. The only points of similarity with Dan 7,2-14 are (1) the presence of a sea and (2) the similarity of the descriptions of Baal and 'One like a Son of Man': Baal is called, 'Rider on the Clouds'⁽¹¹⁾ whilst 'One like a Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven'; Baal is urged: 'Take your everlasting kingdom, your dominion for ever and ever'⁽¹²⁾ and 'One like a Son of Man' 'was given ... an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away and his kingdom will not be destroyed'. These obvious similarities between Baal and 'One like a Son of Man' in Daniel were pointed out by Emerton in 1958⁽¹³⁾ as was (3) the third similarity between the Baal myth and Dan 7 with the former describing El as 'Father of Years' and the latter, God as 'Ancient of Days'. However, as these are the only real points of contact between the two texts, they are not sufficient in themselves to support the contention that Dan 7,2-14 derived its mythic pattern from Canaan. Further consideration will be given below to the figure of One like a Son of Man and an Ancient of Days in an attempt to account for the apparent similarity of their descriptions with Canaanite deities⁽¹⁴⁾.

2. The Problem of Access to the Baal texts

Those scholars who assert that Canaanite mythology is the mythic background for Dan 7,2-14 have difficulty in explaining how such mythology was transmitted to our author. Bentzen⁽¹⁵⁾ posited that he accessed it through the royal cult. Such a position is dependent, in turn, upon the acceptance of Mowinckel's theory that there was an Israelite New Year Festival, which celebrated YHWH's victory over a chaos monster⁽¹⁶⁾. This theory is grounded

(9) J.J. COLLINS, "Apocalyptic Genre and Mythic Allusions in Daniel", *JSOT* 21 (1981) 83-100, esp. 91-93.

(10) In the Canaanite myth the sea (Yam) is in rebellion against El whereas in Daniel the four winds of heaven (God) cause the sea to bring forth the beasts. The sea then is an instrument of God not an opposing force.

(11) GIBSON, *Canaanite Myths*, 43-44 [= KTU 1.2 IV:8,29].

(12) *Ibid.*, 43 [= KTU 1.2 IV:10].

(13) J.A. EMERTON, "The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery", *JTS* 9 (1958) 225-242.

(14) The other text from Ugarit which concerns Baal in conflict with an adversary is that of Baal and Mot. However Mot overcomes Baal and it was the goddess Anat who killed Mot in order to free Baal. This text has no points of contact with Dan 7,2-14; see GIBSON, *Canaanite Myths*, 68-81 [= KTU 1.6]. P.G. MOSCA, "Ugarit and Daniel 7: A Missing Link", *Bib* 67 (1986) 496-512, draws attention to a scholarly dispute as to whether the two Baal texts form a unity or are separate; cf. esp. 502-508. For the present paper there is no need to enter the debate.

(15) A. BENTZEN, *Daniel* (HAT 1; Tübingen 1952) 64.

(16) S. MOWINCKEL, *Psalmestudien*. II. Das Thronbesteigungsfest Jahwäs und der Ursprung der Eshatologie (Kristiania 1922).

upon various biblical passages which mention YHWH killing such a monster, including some psalms whose *Sitz im Leben* is likely to have been the Temple: Rahab in Ps 89,10 and Isa 51,9; Leviathan in Ps 74,14 and Isa 27,1; the sea monster(s) (*tannîn*) in Isa 51,9, Ps 74,13 and a probable allusion in Jer 51,34⁽¹⁷⁾. The hypothetical nature of the Enthronement Festival aside, how would the author of Dan 7,2-14, writing in the second century B.C., have had access to it? It was posited by Mowinckel that it was part of the royal cult but Kingship (to all intents and purposes), and thus the royal cult, ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 587-586 B.C. Possible remnants in the Psalms and Prophets of such a festival are too fragmentary to have furnished the mythic pattern of Daniel's vision⁽¹⁸⁾. Collins has suggested that Daniel may have had access to some second century B.C. version of the myth⁽¹⁹⁾ but the weakness of this position has been highlighted by Mosca, both from the point of view of the unlikelihood of direct borrowing from Canaan and from a lack of direct evidence as to the second century format of a Baal myth⁽²⁰⁾. Mosca has suggested that the Canaanite material was mediated to the author of Dan 7 via Ps 89⁽²¹⁾. That Ps 89 contains imagery which derives from Canaanite mythology is clear⁽²²⁾, and although the present writer agrees with Mosca that Ps 89 has been undervalued as a source for Daniel's vision⁽²³⁾ nevertheless the similarities between the two texts are not sufficiently great for Ps 89 to have been the prototype for the mythic pattern of the entire Danielic vision: The four winds do not feature, only one beast appears and it is not killed by fire; there is no judgement scene (although 'throne' and 'judgement' are both mentioned). Mosca himself recognises aspects of dissimilarity between the two texts and attributes these to their varying purposes and timeframes⁽²⁴⁾.

3. Mesopotamian Texts

A search of Mesopotamia texts proved more fruitful in the search for a forerunner to the mythic pattern of Dan 7,2-14⁽²⁵⁾. It is my contention that Gunkel's thesis in 1895 of a correspondence between the *Enuma Elish*

⁽¹⁷⁾ Other passages which mention these creatures although YHWH is not represented as killing them, are (a) Rahab: Job 9,13; 26,12; Isa 30,7; Ps 87,4; (b) Leviathan: Job 41,1; Ps 106,6; (c) the *tannîn* (as sea monsters): Gen 1,21; Deut 32,33; Job 7,12; Pss 91,13, 148,7; Lam 4,3.

⁽¹⁸⁾ See above and n. 17 for lists of texts.

⁽¹⁹⁾ COLLINS, *Apocalyptic Vision*, 102-104. Collins plays down this suggestion in later works (IDEM, "Stirring up the Great Sea", 132; IDEM, *Daniel*, 292).

⁽²⁰⁾ MOSCA, "Ugarit and Daniel 7", 488-489.

⁽²¹⁾ MOSCA, "Ugarit and Daniel 7", 508-515.

⁽²²⁾ Rahab, who appears in v. 11 [10], is the most obvious example.

⁽²³⁾ Prior to Mosca, only vv. 10-11 [9-10] which relate to YHWH's triumph over the sea and the defeat of Rahab were adduced as being similar to aspects of Daniel's vision. The present writer is preparing a book which considers the Bible as a key to Daniel and in it Ps 89 will feature as the background to some, but not all, of the imagery of the vision in Dan 7.

⁽²⁴⁾ MOSCA, "Ugarit and Daniel", 510.

⁽²⁵⁾ H.S. Kvanvig posited that an Akkadian vision of the Netherworld was the prototype for Daniel (cf. n. 5). COLLINS, *Daniel*, 284-286, gives a critique, with which the present writer agrees, of Kvanvig's position, suggesting that although there are superficial similarities, the pattern of relationships is different in the two visions.

and Daniel has been undervalued. This is likely to have happened for two reasons: firstly Gunkel's treatment does not refer in a sufficiently precise way to all the similarities and secondly, the discoveries at Ugarit drew scholarly attention away from the Enuma Elish⁽²⁶⁾.

In the following table the correspondences between Dan 7,2-14 and the Enuma Elish are delineated.

Daniel 7	Enuma Elish
<i>The four winds of heaven⁽²⁷⁾ caused⁽²⁸⁾ the great sea⁽²⁹⁾ to break forth (Dan 7,2).</i>	<i>...Anu formed and produced four winds... He caused a wave and it roiled Tiamat (Ee I 105,108^[30]).</i>
Four great beasts arise from the sea which had been disturbed; the first three are characterised in terms of known creatures (Dan 7,3-6).	Eleven ⁽³¹⁾ monsters, who are described in terms of known animals, real or mythological, result from Tiamat having been disturbed (Ee I 134-144; also II 20-30; III 24-34,82-92).

⁽²⁶⁾ In a recent article A.P. HAYMAN, "The Man from the Sea in 4 Ezra 13", *JJS* 49 (1998) 1-16, asserts his belief, in passing, that Daniel 7 derives from the Babylonian account of creation as does E. LUCAS, "Resolving the Enigma", *VT* 50 (2000) 66-80; see esp. 69-70.

⁽²⁷⁾ It is noteworthy that the four winds are from heaven i.e. under the control of God. It is He who causes the great sea to break forth. MOSCA, "Ugarit and Daniel 7", 500, n. 19, makes this point also. YHWH is *not* in conflict with the sea as Collins asserts (COLLINS, *Apocalyptic Vision*, 105; IDEM, *Daniel*, 288).

⁽²⁸⁾ The root נָחַם or נָחַם appears elsewhere in the Bible only six times. It is used of 'bringing forth' in birth (Mic 4,10; Ps 22,10[9]) and Job 38,8 links the notion to the sea breaking forth. Two passages posit that adult humans 'break forth' and the implication is that this is in a violent manner. These are Ezek 32,2 and Judg 20,33. The former describes Pharaoh in terms of a chaos monster whereas the latter concerns a battle in which '...the liars in wait of Israel broke forth out of their place...' There are contextual links then between the chaos tradition and the use of נָחַם in the Bible. Theodotion, the Vulgate and Rashi have 'fought with' or 'attacked' but this is probably too strong a translation. 'Stirred up' is the commonest modern translation but as נָחַם in the aphel has a causative sense the present writer wanted to make this clear, hence the translation above. Such a translation underlines the function of (the four winds of) heaven in what is to follow. It indicates God's reversal of his shutting up the sea, when it was about to break forth in Job 38,8. There may also be an allusion to Judg 20,33 ('the liars in wait of Israel break forth...') for it is the only Biblical passage which uses the hiphil participle (i.e. the hebrew equivalent of the aramaic aphel participle) and, of course, the beasts which arise from the sea are nations which dominate Israel.

⁽²⁹⁾ The majority of scholars see here a reference to the sea of chaos rather than the Mediterranean which the expression 'the great sea' indicates elsewhere in the Bible. J. GOLDINGAY, *Daniel* (WBC 30; Dallas 1988) 160, and CASEY, *Son of Man*, 18, are the only recent scholars to argue for the Mediterranean. A.E. GARDNER, "The Great Sea of Dan. vii 2", *VT* 49 (1999) 402-405, points out that in Pss 74,13-14; 104,25-26; Isa 51,9-10 there is a blurring of the distinction between an actual and a mythological sea. Further Ps 104,25-26 is likely to have been used by the author of Daniel in the construction of his narrative as four words from Dan 7,2-3 appear there, including גִּבּוֹרִים.

⁽³⁰⁾ All quotations from the Enuma Elish are taken from B. FOSTER, "Epic of Creation (1.111)", *The Context of Scripture* (ed. W.W. HALLO) (Leiden 1997) 390-402.

⁽³¹⁾ Each time, two lines after the list of monsters is given, the number is specified as eleven.

<p>The fourth beast is terrible and powerful etc. <i>It was different from all beasts that were before it</i> (Dan 7,7). N.B. Unlike the previous creatures the fourth beast is not likened to any known animal.</p>	<p>Qingu⁽³²⁾ was to lead the army of monsters; he was made greater than all the other gods of chaos (Ee I 148; also II 34; III 38,96). N.B Qingu is not described in physical terms.</p>
<p>A little horn comes up, before which three of the first horns are plucked up by the roots. In the horn were eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things (Dan 7,8).</p>	
<p><i>Thrones were placed. And one that was [Ancient of Days] sat.</i> The Ancient of Days and his throne are described (Dan 7,9bc.10a). <i>A stream of fire issued and came forth from before him, A thousand thousands served him And ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; The judgement was set and the books were opened.</i> (Dan 7,9-10)</p>	<p><i>All the great gods, ordainers (of destinies) came before Anshar...</i> (Ee III 130-131). <i>To Marduk, their champion they ordained destiny. They set out for him a princely dais</i> (Ee III 138-IV 1). Then follows a eulogy of Marduk and eternal kingship is conferred on him. <i>With raging fire he covered his body</i> (Ee III 130-IV 40).</p>
<p><i>...The beast was slain and his body destroyed and he was given to the burning of fire</i> (Dan 7,11).</p>	<p>Qingu was killed. His blood was shed and mankind was made from it (Ee VI 13-32). However in texts recovered from the Babylonian New Year's Festival Marduk burnt Qingu⁽³³⁾.</p>
<p><i>And as for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time</i> (Dan 7,12).</p>	<p>The rest of the monsters were taken captive (Qingu was at first among them) (Ee IV 115-120,127).</p>
<p><i>...There came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man And he came even to the Ancient of Days and they caused him to approach before him</i> (Dan 7,13).</p>	<p>Marduk is urged: <i>Draw near, approach Anshar</i> (Ee II 134). <i>He drew near and waited upon Anshar</i> (Ee II 137).</p>

⁽³²⁾ Some translators render the name as Kingu, e.g., A. HEIDEL, *The Babylonian Genesis. The Story of the Creation* (Chicago ²1951); S. LANGDON, *The Babylonian Epic of Creation* (Oxford 1923), but B. FOSTER, "Epic of Creation", and S. DALLEY, *Myths from Mesopotamia* (Oxford 1989) prefer Qingu. FOSTER, *Before the Muses*. An Anthology of Akkadian Literature (Bethesda 1993) I, 359, n. 3, refers to Th. JACOBSEN, *The Harab Myth* (SANE II.3; Malibu 1984) 16, who suggests that the name comes from the Sumerian word for 'work' hence the creation of mankind from Qingu's blood. (Mankind was created, according to Ee VI 8 to spare the gods from work.)

⁽³³⁾ Cf. LANGDON, *The Babylonian Epic of Creation*, 21, n. 1, also 23. In his note Langdon refers to H. ZIMMERN, *Zum Babilonischen Neujahrstfest* (BSGW 58; Berlin 1906) 131, and n. 2, who, he says, compares the burning of Kingu with the fourth beast in Daniel.

*And to him was given dominion and
glory and sovereignty
That all peoples, nations and
languages should serve him.*

Marduk is given dominion over the
gods and over mankind (Ee VI 93-107;
cf. also IV 14).

*They established him forever for
Lordship of heaven and earth* (Ee VI
100).

*His dominion is an everlasting
dominion which will not pass away
And his sovereignty will not be
destroyed.* (Dan 7,14)

*Henceforth your command can not be
changed* (Ee IV 7).

Several aspects of the correspondence strongly suggest that the author of Daniel was aware of the Enuma Elish:

(1) in both there is a connection between the four winds of heaven and the stirring up of the sea or waves;

(2) a number of monstrous animals result from the sea or Tiamat having been disturbed;

(3) Qingu, like the fourth beast in Daniel, is not characterised by the name of a known creature, whereas the earlier ones are in both the Enuma Elish and Daniel;

(4) the survival of all the beasts, bar one, occurs in both Daniel and the Enuma Elish;

(5) in both texts the last beast of chaos is the most terrible;

(6) the last beast is killed by fire in Daniel and such a tradition was present in the Babylonian New Year Festival;

(7) everlasting dominion is given to One like a Son of Man in Daniel and to Marduk in the Enuma Elish.

In addition there are some correspondences in vocabulary between Daniel and the Enuma Elish, although, with the exception of the word for 'four' (a common semitic word) these are not on an etymological level⁽³⁴⁾. In key places where similar statements are made in the Enuma Elish and Dan 7 the Akkadian does not have an Aramaic correspondent deriving from the same root. Rather, the author of Daniel has had to use an Aramaic word with the same meaning but deriving from a different root. Correspondences that were discovered are as follows:

(1) 'the four winds' (Dan 7,2 cf. Ee I 105,108);

(2) the causative form of the respective verbs is used for the disturbance of the sea (Dan 7,2; cf. Ee I 105,108);

(3) 'fire' issues from both the Ancient of Days and Marduk (Dan 7,10 cf. Ee IV 40);

(4) 'He came to the Ancient of Days and they caused him to approach before him' (Dan 7,13); cf. 'Draw near, approach Anshar' (Ee II 134) and 'He drew near and waited upon Anshar' (Ee II 137).

⁽³⁴⁾ I would like to thank Dr. Noel Weeks of Sydney University for his transcription of key cuneiform words and his advice concerning a lack of a common etymology between the Akkadian and the corresponding Aramaic. This enabled me to render a judgement concerning the nature of Daniel's relationship to the Enuma Elish.

The sparse nature of the linguistic correspondences, but the strong thematic similarities, suggest that the author of Daniel was aware of the *Enuma Elish* and was drawing upon his memory rather than upon a written text when he wrote his vision.

4. *Transmuted elements and aspects of discontinuity between the Enuma Elish and Daniel*

What becomes clear in this comparison between Dan 7,2-14 and the *Enuma Elish* is that the polytheistic aspects of the latter have been transmuted. Tiamat has become the great sea; the monsters of chaos are no longer gods but human powers; the gods who determine the destinies are, in Daniel, the thousand thousands who served him and the ten thousand times ten thousand who stood before him; the Ancient of Days embodies aspects of Anshar, Anu and Marduk in that Anshar and Anu, whose names are virtually interchangeable in the epic, represent the great high god whose position is then given to Marduk because of his ability to overcome the monsters of chaos. It is said of the Ancient of Days that he sat when thrones were placed; Marduk does likewise in Ee VI 93-94. Further as 'a stream of fire issued and came forth from before him [the Ancient of Days]' (Dan 7,9) so Marduk covered his body with fire (Ee IV 40). There is another reference in the Epic to Marduk's fiery aspect: 'When he moved his lips a fire broke out' (Ee I 96). Nevertheless some of Marduk's aspects are similar to those belonging to 'One like a Son of Man' in Daniel as a comparison of Dan 7,14 and Ee IV 7,14 shows. In Dan 7,10 we learn that 'the books were opened' whereas in Ee IV 33 the gods 'ordained the Lord's (i.e. Marduk's) destiny'.

The main lack of correspondence between the cited passages of the *Enuma Elish* and Daniel is that Marduk is summoned to the divine court and enthroned *prior* to judgement being passed upon Qingu and his fellow monsters whereas 'One like a Son of Man' enters the tale only *after* the punishment of the four beasts. It may be, though, that his prior appearance is implied in Dan 7,9 which says, 'thrones [in the plural] were placed'. Aware of the theological problems raised by such a translation, some scholars have posited that רמי be read as 'were cast down' ⁽³⁵⁾. If such a translation is correct then it would indicate that the thrones of the beasts 'were cast down'. In terms of logic this does not accord with the chronological unfolding of the text of Dan 7 for 'the judgement was set and the books were opened' at the end of verse 10 *after* the Divine court had been convened, not before it. Further, after the killing and burning of the fourth beast in verse 11 it is stated in verse 12, concerning the rest of the beasts, that 'they had their dominion taken away'. This would have been an unnecessary statement to make if it had already been said in verse 9.

5. *Dan 7,2-14 and Canaanite Mythology Revisited*

It was pointed out earlier that a close similarity has been claimed for the Danielic One like a Son of Man and Baal in the Ugaritic myth because both

⁽³⁵⁾ The AV provides this translation which also appears in many traditional Jewish commentaries. For details cf. MONTGOMERY, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (ICC; Edinburgh 1927) 299-300.

have been given dominion and they are each connected in some way to the clouds. However Marduk also was given dominion and it should be noted that in Ee II [118] Marduk is urged: 'Make straight, quickly, with the storm chariot'. The word 'chariot' is uncertain but 'storm' is not. Interestingly Anu is described elsewhere as 'Rider of great storms'⁽³⁶⁾. Riding on storms' implies 'storm clouds'. The 'cloud' imagery then appears in both Canaanite and Babylonian mythology.

It has been argued that in the Bible no figure other than YHWH rode on the clouds (Deut 33,26; 2 Sam 22,11; Isa 19,1; Ps 68,34) and thus the imagery for One like a Son of Man doing the same thing must be derived from a Canaanite source which accepts more than one divinity⁽³⁷⁾. It should be noted however that Daniel does not say that One like a Son of Man *rode upon* the clouds rather than he *came with* the clouds of heaven. In other words the clouds of heaven, like the winds of heaven at the beginning of the vision, are under the command of God. Just as he caused the beasts of chaos to appear, so he can bring near One like a Son of Man through the agency of his clouds. The apparent similarity of the descriptions of Baal and One like a Son of Man is not as close then as has been suggested. As far as the Ancient of Days is concerned, it has long been posited by scholars that descriptions of God as old in the Bible⁽³⁸⁾ are just as, if not more, likely to lie behind the title than a direct borrowing from El's epithet, 'Father of Years'. In this case, the author of Daniel has drawn on Biblical passages that may themselves have been influenced by Canaanite ideas.

At first it occurred to the present author to wonder whether a hitherto undiscovered Canaanite text existed that paralleled the *Enuma Elish*, and to which the author of Daniel had access. It is possible that such a text existed particularly in view of the Biblical references to mythological creatures with Canaanite names. There is no evidence to suggest though that Daniel would have had access to such a myth. Further, the phrase 'the four winds of heaven' only appears in post-biblical texts i.e. those that had the possibility of having been influenced by contact with Babylonian literature from the time of the Exile onwards.

6. *The transmission of the Enuma Elish*

Naturally the question of how the author would have had access to the *Enuma Elish* poses itself. In recent years the provenance of the court tales in Daniel has received much attention, with general agreement that they originated and circulated in the Diaspora, probably Babylonia⁽³⁹⁾. It is not

⁽³⁶⁾ Cf. H. FRANKFORT, *Before Philosophy* (Baltimore 1949) 153.

⁽³⁷⁾ Cf. COLLINS, *Daniel*, 290.

⁽³⁸⁾ For example Pss 55,19; 74,1; 93,2.

⁽³⁹⁾ Cf. MONTGOMERY, *Daniel*, 90; W.L. HUMPHREYS, "Life Style for Diaspora: A Study of the Tales of Esther and Daniel", *JBL* 92 (1973) 211-223; P.R. DAVIES, *Daniel* (OTGu; Sheffield 1985) 54-55; COLLINS, *Apocalyptic Vision*, 55; IDEM, *Daniel*, 48. By contrast, J.G. GAMMIE, "The Classification, Stages of Growth and Changing Intentions of the Book of Daniel", *JBL* 95 (1976) 191-204, argues for the provenance of the court tales being Ptolemaic Egypt as do J.C.H. LEBRAM, *Das Buch Daniel* (ZBK.AT 23; Zürich 1984) 20; O.H. STECK, "Weltgeschehen und Gottesvolk im Buche Daniel", *Kirche* (FS. G. Bornkamm; [eds. D. LÜHRMAN – G. STRECKER] Tübingen 1980) 53-78; E. HAAG, *Die*

unreasonable to suppose, therefore, that Dan 7 also originated in Babylonia or was written in Israel by a Babylonian Jew. Dan 1,4 posits that youths like Daniel were taught the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans, although admittedly it refers to a period earlier than the likely time of writing of the vision of Dan 7. Learning would have included acquiring knowledge of the great Babylonian traditions, of which the Enuma Elish was one. It is known that the New Year's Festival, where the Enuma Elish was recited, continued until the third century or later i.e. into the Hellenistic period⁽⁴⁰⁾. Many scholars have objected that Daniel was a pious Jew and it is therefore unthinkable that he would have drawn material from a foreign cult. I am in agreement with this insight which appears to contradict my claim that the mythic pattern of Daniel's vision is similar to that of the Enuma Elish. How can both be right? I would like to suggest the following hypothesis: an educated Jew who lived in Babylon for any length of time would undoubtedly have become familiar with the outline of the Enuma Elish. Aware of allusions in Biblical passages to YHWH killing chaos monsters (but passages which are too brief to have been the prototype for Daniel's vision), it might have been supposed that a full version of the Biblical chaos tradition would have been similar in outline to the Enuma Elish, albeit without its polytheistic elements. In this way the author of Daniel could have constructed his vision, utilising imagery from the Bible⁽⁴¹⁾, some of which ultimately derived from Canaan, within the framework of a mythic pattern from Babylon: a mythic pattern, describing the overcoming of the forces of chaos and the ensuing kingship of the champion of the gods, transformed to accord with the religious beliefs and political history of Israel from the time of the Exile onwards.

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SUMMARY

This paper focuses upon a re-examination of the mythological background to the apocalyptic vision of Daniel 7. The popularly accepted Canaanite source is rejected as the points of correspondence are shown to be even slighter than recognised hitherto. Gunkel's thesis of the Enuma Elish as similar to Dan 7 is revived and given further support. It is pointed out that whereas the question of access, for the author of Daniel, to the Baal mythology is problematic, the Enuma Elish was still being recited in the Hellenistic period.

Errettung Daniels aus der Löwengrube. Untersuchungen zum Ursprung der biblischen Danieltradition (SBS 110; Stuttgart 1983) 94.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Cf. LANGDON, *The Babylonian Epic of Creation*, 20.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Cf. n. 23, 28. In my book in preparation I show that many details of Daniel's vision can be accounted for through Biblical allusion.

The Christology of the Second Letter of Peter

The following essay sets forth in systematic form the Christology expressed in the Second Letter of Peter. Despite the relative neglect of 2 Peter in New Testament scholarship, there have been several recent discussions of its theology⁽¹⁾. However, none discusses 2 Peter's Christology at any length; all focus on its ethics and eschatology. These are clearly the main concerns of 2 Peter. Nevertheless, 2 Peter's presentation of Christ is also significant⁽²⁾.

1. *Jesus as God*

In the first verse of the letter, the author of 2 Peter calls Jesus God. He says that the readers have received faith by the justice τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Because there is only one article, the phrase probably refers to Jesus as both God and savior⁽³⁾. Grammatically parallel phrases occur in 2 Pet 1,11; 2,20; 3,18, and unambiguously designate Jesus as both lord and savior⁽⁴⁾.

This is the only place where 2 Peter explicitly calls Jesus God. However, other things 2 Peter says about Jesus more or less clearly imply this same understanding. One of the clearest instances is 1,3 where the author of 2 Peter speaks of τῆς θείας δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, and the antecedent of αὐτοῦ is probably Jesus, the last named substantive (in v. 2)⁽⁵⁾. Because the author of 2 Peter sees

(1) E. KÄSEMANN, "An Apologia for Primitive Christian Eschatology" in his *Essays on New Testament Themes* (SBT 41; Naperville 1964 [orig. publ.: 1952]) 169-195; T. FORNBERG, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society. A Study of 2 Peter* (CBNT; Lund 1977); R.J. BAUCKHAM, *Jude, 2 Peter* (Word Biblical Themes; Dallas 1990) 41-107; J.D. CHARLES, *Virtue Amidst Vice. The Catalog of Virtues in 2 Peter 1* (JSNTSS 150; Sheffield 1997). Käsemann is critical of 2 Peter, while Fornberg and Bauckham are more appreciative of it. The present essay is of the appreciative kind.

(2) In the terms recently proposed by V.K. Robbins, this essay delineates part of the sacred texture of 2 Peter. See V.K. ROBBINS, *Exploring the Texture of Texts. A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge 1996) 120-131.

(3) R.E. BROWN, *Jesus God and Man* (London 1968) 22; ID., *An Introduction to New Testament Christology* (New York 1994) 184; C. BIGG, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude* (ICC; New York 1901) 250-252; B. REICKE, *The Epistles of James, Peter and Jude* (AB 37; Garden City 1964) 150; J.N.D. KELLY, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (HNTC; New York – Evanston 1969) 297-298; FORNBERG, *Early Church*, 142; R.J. BAUCKHAM, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC 50; Waco 1983) 168-169; M.J. HARRIS, *Jesus as God. The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids 1992) 229-238. Harris lists others who hold this view, as well as those who disagree with it, on p. 238. The former is by far the majority view.

(4) Against this it might be argued that a grammatically parallel phrase (i.e., article-noun-possessive pronoun-καὶ-noun-noun-noun) in 2 Thess 1,12 is to be interpreted as referring to God and Jesus as distinct from one another (BROWN, *Jesus God and Man*, 15-16; ID., *New Testament Christology*, 180; HARRIS, *Jesus as God*, 265-266). However, in this verse the construction pairs the nouns 'God' and 'Lord', in that order. These are not as easily understood as applying to one person as either 'God' and 'savior' or 'Lord' and 'savior'. Note however, the use of the titles 'Lord' and 'God' (reversing the order of 2 Thess 1,12) for a single person in John 20,28; Suetonius, *Domit.* 13.2.

(5) So FORNBERG, *Early Church*, 144; BAUCKHAM, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC) 177. KELLY, *Peter and Jude*, 300, disagrees.

Jesus as God, he also believes that Jesus possesses divine power⁽⁶⁾. Another clear instance is 1,4 where the author of 2 Peter says that those he addresses are destined to become θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως. If divinity is the destiny of those who follow Jesus, Jesus himself is surely divine.

The view that Jesus is divine is probably also implied by 2 Peter's use of 'Lord' as a title both for Jesus and for God. In itself 'Lord' does not imply divinity. Use of this title indicates a relationship between the one who uses the title, and the one to whom it is applied. Calling someone 'Lord' indicates recognition of that person as a superior to whom one gives respect, and even obedience. 'Lord' was widely used as a title for God, but also as a title for any other superior⁽⁷⁾. Nevertheless, 2 Peter's use of the title both for Jesus and for God suggests that they are Lord in the same sense of the word, as does the ambiguity of some of 2 Peter's uses of the title; at times it is not clear whether the title refers to Jesus or to God.

2 Peter uses the title 'Lord' 14 times. Seven times Jesus is explicitly said to be the Lord (1,2.8.11.14.16; 2,20; 3,18). In addition, the Lord and savior in 3,2 is very likely to be Jesus; elsewhere in 2 Peter Jesus is explicitly said to be the Lord and savior (1,11; 2,20; 3,18) or God and savior (1,1). The remaining six occurrences of 'Lord' probably refer to God.

In 2 Pet 2,9 'Lord' is the subject of the apodosis of the long conditional sentence that begins in 2,4. The subject of the protasis is 'God'. It would be most natural to understand 'Lord' as another name for 'God' in this sentence. Thus the sentence would say that if God did not spare the sinful angels, etc., then God knows how to punish and save. It is possible that 'Lord' refers to Jesus here, and the sentence says that if God did not spare the sinful angels, etc., then Jesus knows how to punish and save. However, this would be comprehensible only if 'Lord' were so strongly connected with Jesus, that the title alone meant Jesus; this does not seem to be true for 2 Peter. 2,10 says that those whom the Lord will punish especially include those who despise κυριότητος. This refers back to 'Lord' in v. 9 and takes its meaning from that.

In 2 Pet 2,11 the meaning of 'Lord' is ambiguous. I will suggest below that the slander of the glorious ones mentioned in 2,10 refers to the false teachers' slander of God and Jesus. 2 Pet 2,11 contrasts this behavior with that of the angels. Though greater in might and power than the false teachers, the angels do not bring against them a slanderous judgment from the Lord. If it refers to the glorious ones, 'Lord' might mean either God or Jesus. Or it may refer back to κυριότητος in v. 10. If so, it most likely refers to God.

2 Pet 3,8 immediately follows a reference to the present heavens and earth's being treasured up for fire by the word of God (3,7). This makes it likely that 'Lord' in 3,8 refers to God. Likewise, since 3,8 quotes Ps 90,4; it would be most natural to understand 'Lord' as a reference to God. However, it is possible that the author of 2 Peter sees this as a passage that refers to the Lord Jesus. 'Lord' in 3,9 and 15 must refer to the same person as 'Lord' in 3,8.

⁽⁶⁾ BIGG, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, 253. 2 Pet 1,16 implies that Jesus' power was revealed at the transfiguration and that it is connected with his παρουσία.

⁽⁷⁾ On this see O. CULLMANN, *The Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia 1963) 195-203; F. HAHN, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology*. Their History in Early Christianity (London 1969) 68-73.

3,9 says that the Lord is not slow about the promise, but is patient; 3,15 refers again to the patience of the Lord.

Finally, 2 Pet 3,10 refers to the day of the Lord. The parallel with 'day of God' in 3,12 suggests that 'Lord' here means God. On the other hand, 3,10 quotes 1 Thess 5,2 where 'day of the Lord' is probably understood as the day of the Lord Jesus.

If these six occurrences of 'Lord' refer to God, then 2 Peter uses 'Lord' about half of the time to mean Jesus, and the other half to mean God. This suggests that 2 Peter sees God and Jesus as the same kind of Lord. In addition, we have just seen that the occurrences of 'Lord' that probably refer to God are themselves ambiguous, and might be seen as referring to Jesus. This also indicates that God and Jesus are Lord in the same sense of the word in 2 Peter.

In 2 Pet 1,11 the author refers to the eternal kingdom of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. This suggests that, as Lord, Jesus is an eternal king, like God. In 1,14 the author says that our Lord Jesus Christ has revealed to him that he will die soon. This probably refers to John 21,18-19⁽⁸⁾ and thus to a revelation given by Jesus to Peter before Jesus' definitive return to the Father. It might also refer to a revelation subsequent to that⁽⁹⁾. If so, the verse implies that Jesus continues to guide his followers from heaven, again like God.

In 2 Pet 1,16 the author of 2 Peter says that he and others were eyewitnesses (ἐπόπται) of Jesus' majesty. Since this term was used to designate the highest level of initiate into the Eleusinian mysteries, it implies that the vision of Jesus transfigured was comparable to that. And if the highest level of initiation involved a vision of the goddess⁽¹⁰⁾, the word may also suggest that the transfiguration was a vision of Jesus' divinity.

The transfiguration was an occasion on which God, the μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης, gave τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν to Jesus. This suggests that Jesus' glory is the same as God's and that Jesus is divine. Thus in 3,18 the author of 2 Peter praises Jesus with the kind of doxology usually reserved for God. According to Bauckham, the phrase δόξη καὶ ἄρετῃ in 1,3 is synonymous with divine power⁽¹¹⁾.

In 2 Pet 2,10, using language borrowed from the Letter of Jude, the author criticizes the false teachers for slandering the δόξας. This is usually understood to refer to church⁽¹²⁾ or secular⁽¹³⁾ leaders or to angels, either good⁽¹⁴⁾ or evil⁽¹⁵⁾. These interpretations may be too much influenced by Jude's use of the word. In the context of 2 Peter it is most likely that the δόξας are God and Jesus, since they are the ones said in 2 Peter to have glory — God in 1,17; Jesus in 1,3,17; and 3,18. The false teachers' slander of God and Jesus is their skepticism about Jesus' return and all that will accompany it.

⁽⁸⁾ BIGG, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, 264; REICKE, *James, Peter and Jude*, 155; BAUCKHAM, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC) 200-201; J.H. NEYREY, *2 Peter, Jude* (AB 37C; New York 1993) 167.

⁽⁹⁾ KELLY, *Peter and Jude*, 313-314.

⁽¹⁰⁾ FORNBERG, *Early Church*, 123.

⁽¹¹⁾ BAUCKHAM, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC) 179.

⁽¹²⁾ BIGG, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, 279-280.

⁽¹³⁾ REICKE, *James, Peter and Jude*, 167.

⁽¹⁴⁾ NEYREY, *2 Peter, Jude*, 213-214.

⁽¹⁵⁾ KELLY, *Peter and Jude*, 337; BAUCKHAM, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC) 261.

The description of Jesus in 2,11 as the master who has purchased his followers might allude to the practice of sacral manumission at Delphi⁽¹⁶⁾. This involved sale of slaves to a god in order to free them. If this is what the author of 2 Peter has in mind, he thinks of those purchased by Jesus as effectively freed, and only nominally transferred to another owner. This would be another instance of 2 Peter's presentation of Jesus as divine.

2. *Jesus as distinct from God*

Although 2 Peter calls Jesus God and consistently presents him as divine, God and Jesus are clearly distinguished in 2 Peter. They are first distinguished from one another in 1,2, where the author wishes that peace might be multiplied for the readers by the knowledge of both God and Jesus our Lord. Because this phrase closely follows and parallels the phrase in 1,1 that refers to Jesus as God, it is sometimes used to argue that Jesus is not being called God in 1,1⁽¹⁷⁾. However, we see a similar alternation between identifying Jesus with, and distinguishing him from, God in the first verses of the gospel according to John. In John 1,1-2 the author first says that the Word was with God, then that the Word was God, then (again) that the Word was with God⁽¹⁸⁾. It seems most likely that both 2 Peter and John consciously intend to identify Jesus with God and to distinguish him from God.

In addition to the two occurrences of 'God' in 1,1-2, 2 Peter uses the word five other times. These five uses of 'God' present the following picture of God:

(1) there were of old heavens and earth created by the word of God (3,5). 2 Peter does not say explicitly that God created the present heavens and earth, but this can probably be assumed;

(2) God did not spare the angels who sinned, but sent them to hell (2,4);

(3) God did not spare the ancient world (cf. 3,6), but preserved Noah (2,5);

(4) God condemned Sodom and Gomorrah, reducing them to ashes and establishing them as a sign of what will happen to the ungodly (2,6), but saved Lot (2,7-8);

(5) the prophets were men who spoke from God (1,21);

(6) God the father gave Jesus honor and glory when a voice was conveyed to him by the majestic glory, 'This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased' (1,17);

(7) the present heavens and earth have been treasured up by the word of God for fire on the day of judgment (3,7); this is also the day of God (3,12).

⁽¹⁶⁾ NEYREY, *2 Peter, Jude*, 191-192. According to D.B. MARTIN, *Slavery as Salvation. The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven - London 1990) xvi, however, this thesis, first proposed by Deissmann, is now generally rejected because of differences in terminology between the inscriptions that speak of sacral manumission and the New Testament.

⁽¹⁷⁾ NEYREY, *2 Peter, Jude*, 148.

⁽¹⁸⁾ HARRIS, *Jesus as God*, 275. Another parallel to the way 2 Peter both identifies Jesus with, and distinguishes him from, God may be seen in 2 Peter's one reference to the Holy Spirit. In 2 Pet 1,21 the author says that in prophecy, 'moved by the Holy Spirit men spoke from God'. Prophecy is said to derive both from the Holy Spirit and from God. This suggests an identity between the two, but the use of two different names suggests that they are distinct.

The six occurrences of 'Lord' that probably refer to God add the following items to the depiction of God in 2 Peter:

(8) God knows how to save the pious and punish the wicked (2,9), a general conclusion from the specific cases mentioned in 2,4-8;

(9) time is different for God than for humans (3,8);

(10) God is not slow to keep the promise of Jesus' return and all that will accompany it, but is patient, wanting all to repent (3,9.15).

God and Jesus are most explicitly distinguished in item 6. However, items 1-5, 8-9 describe God in terms drawn from the Hebrew scriptures. This is a figure distinct from Jesus unless the author of 2 Peter thinks Jesus is the God revealed by the Hebrew scriptures. Nothing suggests this.

God's creation of the first heavens and earth by means of the word probably refers to the depiction of creation in Genesis 1 as produced by God's speech, which is also summed up as by the word in Ps 33,6⁽¹⁹⁾. God created the first heavens and earth ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι' ὕδατος. This refers to Gen 1,2.6-9 and indicates that God created by first separating the primeval waters with the dome of the heavens and then gathering them together below the heavens so that earth might appear⁽²⁰⁾.

God's punishment of the sinful angels refers to Gen 6,1-4, but presumes an understanding of it that is only explicit in extra-biblical literature. God's destruction of the ancient world and preservation of Noah are drawn from Gen 6,5-8,19. If δι' ὧν in 2 Pet 3,6 refers to water and the word of God⁽²¹⁾, then God destroyed the first heavens and earth by means of both water and the word. The former means that God ceased to restrain the primeval waters, and creation was undone (cf. Gen 7,11).

God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and salvation of Lot come from Gen 19,1-29. Prophets sent by God appear very frequently in the Bible. We have already noted that the different meaning of time for God than for humans derives from Ps 90,4.

Although 2 Peter's presentation of God is clearly drawn from the Hebrew scriptures, the author does not say anything about God's election of, and subsequent dealings with, Israel. 2 Peter presents God as God of the whole world and has little to say about the relationship of God to Israel. This probably indicates that the author writes for Gentiles, for whom God's dealing with people in general is more meaningful than is God's involvement with Israel.

It is noteworthy that 2 Peter often avoids making 'God' the subject of sentences. The main exception to this is 2,4-8, where the author speaks about God's punishment of sinners and salvation of the righteous. Elsewhere the author is respectfully indirect, making 'God' the object of a preposition to indicate that God is the source of something (1,17.21), or putting 'God' in the genitive case (1,2; 3,12). The author also refers to God by speaking of the majestic glory (1,17) and the word of God (3,5).

Even more striking is the emphasis on the word of God in 2 Peter's

⁽¹⁹⁾ BAUCKHAM, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC) 298.

⁽²⁰⁾ KELLY, *Peter and Jude*, 358-359; BAUCKHAM, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC) 297.

⁽²¹⁾ BIGG, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, 293-294; KELLY, *Peter and Jude*, 359-360; BAUCKHAM, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC) 298.

references to God. This is explicit in the statements, mentioned above, that God created the first heavens and earth by the word, then destroyed them through the word, and has treasured up the present heavens and earth for destruction by the same word⁽²²⁾. It is implicit in the statement that prophets spoke from God, i.e., they spoke the word of God, and in the story of the transfiguration, when God spoke words concerning Jesus. It may even be implicit in the examples of God's saving the pious and punishing the wicked that are cited in 2,4-8, if they are seen as examples of prophecy that point to the end of the world.

3. *Jesus and God*

2 Peter sees Jesus as God, yet distinct from God. How can this be? Despite the emphasis on the word of God noted above, the author of 2 Peter does not explain the relationship between Jesus and God by saying that Jesus is the Word of God. The gospel of John first proposed this explanation, and it has been very important in subsequent Christian theology. However, 2 Peter does not seem to identify Jesus and the word of God.

2 Peter explains the relationship between Jesus and God by saying that Jesus is the Son of God. This occurs in 1,16-18, 2 Peter's account of the transfiguration. In v. 16 the author says that he did not make known to the readers the δύνανμιν καὶ παρουσίαν of Jesus by following myths, but as a result of having been an eyewitness of Jesus' majesty. In v. 17 he goes on to say that Jesus received τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν from God the Father and that a voice was conveyed to him from the μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης saying, 'This is my son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased'.

Jesus' reception of τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν from God probably refers to his being transfigured, as is narrated in the accounts of the transfiguration in the synoptic gospels (Mark 9,2-8 and parallels)⁽²³⁾. The voice identifies Jesus as the beloved son of God the Father.

In the Hebrew scriptures 'son of God' does not imply a special ontological relationship with God. 'Son of' is an idiom in Semitic languages that expresses a range of relationships in addition to that of biological descent. 'Son of God' indicates a relationship with God shared by many people, including the people of Israel as a whole, the king of Israel and the Messiah. However, in the Hellenistic world, 'son of God' designated divinities who were seen as literal offspring of the gods⁽²⁴⁾.

Since 2 Peter regards Jesus as God, it is very likely that 2 Peter understands the phrase on Hellenistic lines. Bauckham argues persuasively that the reference to the 'holy mountain' in v. 18 indicates that the author sees

⁽²²⁾ REICKE, *James, Peter and Jude*, 175.

⁽²³⁾ BIGG, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, 267; BAUCKHAM, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC) 217-218. KELLY, *Peter and Jude*, 319 suggests that only the reception of δόξαν refers to the transfiguration.

⁽²⁴⁾ On this see CULLMANN, *Christology*, 271-275; HAHN, *Titles*, 279-284; M. HENGEL, *The Son of God. The Origin of Christology and the History of Jewish-Hellenistic Religion* (Philadelphia 1976) 21-56; F. YOUNG, "Two Roots or a Tangled Mass", *The Myth of God Incarnate* (ed. J. HICK) (London 1977) 87-121; J.D.G. DUNN, *Christology in the Making. A New Testament Inquiry in the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Philadelphia 1980) 13-22, esp. 18-19.

the words of v. 17 as an allusion to Ps 2,7⁽²⁵⁾. Nevertheless, he may understand them in a Hellenistic sense. This would be consistent with the presentation of Jesus as God, yet distinct from God described above. Jesus is God in the sense that he was revealed to be son of God at his transfiguration. He is distinct from God because he is the son, not God himself.

4. *The background and foreground of 2 Peter's Christology*

Jesus is the son of God the father. If the author of 2 Peter understands this as an ontological relationship, it is easy to understand why he calls Jesus God and sees Jesus as having divine power, sharing divine nature, possessing God's glory. It is also easy to see why both Jesus and God are properly called Lord. What is not easy to understand is why the author of 2 Peter does not think there are two Gods.

Calling Jesus God would most naturally mean either that he is identical with God, or that there are two Gods. Because early Christians did not wish to assert either of these things, use of the title 'God' for Jesus is rare in the New Testament, though more common in post-New Testament Christian literature⁽²⁶⁾. Jesus is clearly called God only in John 1,1; 20,28 and Heb 1,8, though there are several other passages (in addition to 2 Pet 1,1) that are probably to be interpreted this way⁽²⁷⁾. The adjective *θεῖος* is used elsewhere in the New Testament only in Acts 17,29, where it refers to God.

Jesus is frequently called son of God in the New Testament. In the synoptic gospels the title is likely to be used as it is in the Hebrew scriptures. In the gospel and letters of John and the letter to the Hebrews, the title is likely to have a more Hellenistic sense, as I have argued it does in 2 Peter. Like 2 Peter, these writings also call Jesus God. The meaning of the title in the letters of Paul is uncertain⁽²⁸⁾.

The use of 'God' and related titles for Jesus in 2 Peter and elsewhere in the New Testament, probably reflects theological developments among Jews influenced by Hellenistic culture. In its early history the people of Israel seem to have given exclusive allegiance to one God without denying the existence of others. Because of this the Hebrew Bible often refers to gods alongside the God of Israel (e.g., Exod 2,2-3; Ps 82,1.6) and even occasionally uses 'God' as a title for human beings⁽²⁹⁾. For example, Moses is called god (*אלהים*) in Exod 7,1; cf. 4,16, and the king is called god in Ps 45,6 (*אלהים*) and Isa 9,6 (*אל*). From at least the sixth century BCE onward Israel was monotheistic in the strict sense, denying the existence of other gods.

Greco-Roman religion was polytheistic, recognizing the existence of

⁽²⁵⁾ BAUCKHAM, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC) 219-221.

⁽²⁶⁾ See early examples in Ignatius of Antioch, *Smyrn.* 1.1; *Eph.* 1.1; 7.2; 15.3; 19.3. Cf. also Pliny's statement that early Christians chant in honor of Christ as if to God (*Ep.* 10.96.7).

⁽²⁷⁾ On this see CULLMANN, *Christology*, 306-314; BROWN, *Jesus God and Man*, 1-38; ID., *New Testament Christology*, 171-195; HARRIS, *Jesus as God*. Brown considers this interpretation probable in the case of the following passages: John 1,18; Titus 2,13; Rom 9,5; 1 John 5,20.

⁽²⁸⁾ See CULLMANN, *Christology*, 290-305; DUNN, *Christology*, 33-60.

⁽²⁹⁾ HARRIS, *Jesus as God*, 22-26.

many gods, and rather readily speaking of human beings, especially rulers, as gods⁽³⁰⁾. In contact with this culture, Hellenistic Jews adopted this usage to some extent, in part reviving the similar language of the Bible⁽³¹⁾. Philo of Alexandria once refers to God as supreme father of gods and humans (*De spec. leg.* 2.165). He distinguishes between God and God's two highest powers, the creative and the kingly⁽³²⁾. God is most properly called the one who is (ὁ ὅν), while the creative power is called God and the kingly power is called Lord⁽³³⁾. Standing between God and these two powers is the Word of God (*De cher.* 28; *De fuga* 95). In *Quest. in Gen.* 2.62 Philo calls the Word a second God. Depending on Exod 7,1, Philo often refers to Moses as God⁽³⁴⁾. At one point Philo observes that the passage does not mean that Moses actually was God (*Quod det.* 161-162; cf. also *Quod omnis prob.* 43). However, at another point he simply says that Moses was named God (*De vita Mosis* 1.158)⁽³⁵⁾.

Even more strikingly Hellenistic Jews made abundant use of θεός⁽³⁶⁾. In view of Philo's references to Moses as God, it is not surprising that he also calls Moses divine. For example, in *Quest. in Ex.* 2.29 Philo says that when Moses, the prophetic mind, becomes divinely inspired and led by God, he becomes kin to God and truly divine⁽³⁷⁾. Philo also speaks of the high priest as divine⁽³⁸⁾. Although Philo most often uses divine power as a synonym for

⁽³⁰⁾ HARRIS, *Jesus as God*, 27-28. Note, for example, recognition of Herod Agrippa as god in Acts 12,22; Josephus, *Ant.* 19.345, 347.

⁽³¹⁾ On this see C.R. HOLLADAY, *Theios Aner in Hellenistic Judaism. A Critique of the Use of This Category in New Testament Christology* (SBLDS 40; Missoula 1977). Holladay argues that Hellenistic Jews were very restrained with regard to divinizing human beings. On use of 'God' as a title by Hellenistic Gentiles and Jews see DUNN, *Christology*, 16-17.

⁽³²⁾ Philo of Alexandria, *De cher.* 27-28; *De sacrif.* 59; *De fuga* 95. A.F. Segal discusses this and other themes in Philo suggesting that there were two Gods in *Two Powers in Heaven*. Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism (SJLA 25; Leiden 1977) 159-181.

⁽³³⁾ Philo of Alexandria, *De plant.* 86-87; *Quis rerum div. heres* 166; *De Abr.* 121; 124-125; *De vita Mosis* 2.99; *Quest. in Gen.* 2.51; 4.2; *Quest. in Ex.* 2.62. In *De conf. ling.* 137; *De mut. nom.* 29, Philo mentions only that the creative power is called God.

⁽³⁴⁾ Philo of Alexandria, *Legum Alleg.* 1.40; *De sacrif.* 9-10; *De migr. Abr.* 84; *De mut. nom.* 19,125-129,208; *De somniis* 2.189; *Quest. in Ex.* 2.6 (Greek fragment). Artapanus says that the Egyptian priests considered Moses worthy to be honored like a God and that he was called Hermes (in Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.27.6). On rabbinic and Samaritan interpretation of Exod 7,1 see W.A. MEEKS, *The Prophet-King*. Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology (NTS 14; Leiden 1967) 192-195, 234-237.

⁽³⁵⁾ HOLLADAY, *Theios Aner*, 108-155, argues that all of these passages must be understood in light of Philo of Alexandria, *Quod det.* 161-162. L. HURTADO, *One God, One Lord*. Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism (Philadelphia 1988) 62-63, agrees. Meeks thinks that at least in *De sacr.* 9-10 Philo calls Moses God in the proper sense (*The Prophet-King*, 103-107, esp. 104-105).

⁽³⁶⁾ KELLY, *Peter and Jude*, 302; BAUCKHAM, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC) 177; HOLLADAY, *Theios Aner*. Holladay points out that θεός has at least four meanings: (1) literally divine, (2) inspired, (3) in some sense related to God, and (4) extraordinary (ibid., 57-58, 237). Holladay discusses Philo's use of θεός on pp. 177-183.

⁽³⁷⁾ On this passage see HOLLADAY, *Theios Aner*, 155-160. Cf. also *De vita Mosis* 1.27; 2.188; *Quest. in Ex.* 2.40, 54.

⁽³⁸⁾ HOLLADAY, *Theios Aner*, 170-173. He cites Philo of Alexandria, *De spec. leg.* 1.116; *De fuga* 108; *De somniis* 2.188-189,231; and *Quis rerum div. heres* 84.

God⁽³⁹⁾, in *De vita Mosis* 1.94 he implies that Aaron exercised divine power in performing signs before Pharaoh. Philo also uses divine nature as a synonym for God (*De Abr.* 144). However, he speaks of the planets as sharing divine nature (*De dec.* 104) and refers to the divine natures in heaven (*De conf. ling.* 154). And in *De post. Caini* 28 he says that God shares his own nature with the one who is eager, i.e., in the first instance Moses⁽⁴⁰⁾.

Josephus refers to Moses as a divine man in *Ant.* 3.180. Josephus uses divine power as a synonym for God⁽⁴¹⁾, but also speaks of the prophet Elisha as having divine power in *Ant.* 9.183. Josephus also uses divine nature as a synonym for God in *Ant.* 8.107⁽⁴²⁾.

Hellenistic Jews also made abundant use of the title son of God. In part this was simply a continuation of the usage of the Hebrew Bible. However, they also used son of God in a more Hellenistic sense. For example, Philo calls the Word of God God's firstborn son (*De agr.* 51) or simply God's firstborn (*De conf. ling.* 146; *De somniis* 1.215).

This combination of monotheism with a broad understanding of divinity to encompass not only God in the strictest sense, but also others, even human beings, closely related to God, forms the background for early Christian use of 'God' and related titles for Jesus.

In *One God, One Lord* Larry Hurtado argues that there was no erosion of monotheism among Hellenistic Jews because none of the divine agents about whom they spoke was worshipped alongside God⁽⁴³⁾. Early Christian reflection on the risen and exalted Jesus viewed him as a divine agent, but introduced the novel idea that Jesus should share the devotion and cultic attention usually reserved for God. This correctly identifies the starting point for the view that Jesus is divine, but does not in itself fully account for the language we find in 2 Peter and elsewhere, i.e., calling Jesus God and speaking of his divine power. In order to do this, we must reckon with the influence of Greek thought on Jewish monotheism.

Richard Bauckham argues that the monotheism of Second Temple Judaism was a matter of believing in one God, identified by several features, and of offering worship to that God alone. Bauckham groups the features that identify God into two categories, those identifying God in relationship to Israel and those identifying God in relationship to all reality. The latter are that God is sole Creator of all things and sole Ruler of all things. Bauckham then argues that there was no ambiguity about this monotheism. Whatever did not share the identifying features of God and receive the worship accorded to God was

⁽³⁹⁾ Cf. Philo of Alexandria, *De Abr.* 26; *De post. Caini* 27; *Quod det.* 83; *De conf. ling.* 115; *Spec. Leg.* 2.2; *De virt.* 54.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Philo makes this comment in interpreting Deut 5.31. His other treatments of this passage imply something very similar, but do not say explicitly that God shares his divine nature with Moses. See Philo of Alexandria, *De sacr.* 8; *De gig.* 48-49; *Quod deus sit imm.* 22-23; *De conf. ling.* 30-31; *De somniis* 2.227-228.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 4.318; 9.58; 19.69.

⁽⁴²⁾ Josephus, *Contra Ap.* 1.232, quotes Manetho as speaking of someone thought to share in divine nature. According to Origen, *Comm. in ev. Joan.* 13.25, Heracleon said that pneumatics receive a share in divine nature when they are given knowledge.

⁽⁴³⁾ Note, however, as HURTADO, *One God, One Lord*, 67, does that Philo addresses a prayer to Moses in *De somniis* 1.164-165.

not God; whatever did share these features and receive this worship was God. However, this monotheism was not simple but allowed for 'real distinction within the unique identity of the one God' (⁴⁴).

Bauckham presents this as an alternative to the view that intermediary figures blurred the boundary between God and all other reality. However, Bauckham's perspective could also be seen as explaining how such blurring occurred. If an intermediary figure gradually shared the identifying features of God and was worshipped along with God, the figure would be seen as sharing the identity of God.

Perhaps we can understand this development in Hellenistic Judaism and early Christianity as follows. When Jewish monotheists encountered Hellenistic polytheism, they began to use the word 'god' in two different ways. They continued to use 'god' as a proper noun to refer to the one God who revealed himself in the Hebrew scriptures. However, they also began to use 'god' occasionally as polytheists did, as a common noun that designated any one of a class of beings. This usage was simply part of the Greek language. When Jews and early Christians used 'god' in this second sense, they were not identifying this 'god' with the God who revealed himself in the Bible, nor were they seriously affirming the existence of more than one god. Rather they were locating this 'god' in the category of the divine (⁴⁵). We do something similar when we speak of the gods and goddesses of ancient Greece or modern India. These two uses of 'god' were logically incompatible. Eventually Jews eliminated this inconsistency by abandoning the second use of 'god', and Christians did so by developing the doctrine of the Trinity.

The existence of this second significance of 'god' among Hellenistic Jews and early Christians is confirmed by Justin Martyr's, *Dialogue with Trypho*. In sections 55-62, 126-129 Justin argues that the Bible speaks of another god besides the Maker of all things (55). In the course of his argument he appeals in passing to Ps 45,6-7 (56). Trypho resists the argument at first, but is eventually persuaded to accept it rather easily.

In making this argument, Justin seems little concerned to avoid affirming the existence of more than one god. He rejects the gods of the Greco-Roman world (*Apology* 6, 25) but not because there is only one god. Justin's main concern was to show that Jesus was God. The problem this presented for monotheism was not foremost in his mind, perhaps because, as a Gentile, polytheism seemed natural to him. However, Justin emphasizes the unity between Jesus and the Maker of all things by saying that Jesus is the son of God and Word of God. Although Jesus and the Father are numerically distinct, they are not separate, just as reason and speech are not separate (⁴⁶).

(⁴⁴) R. BAUCKHAM, *God Crucified*. Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament (Grand Rapids – Cambridge 1998) 1-22. Quotation from p. 22.

(⁴⁵) K. RAHNER, *God, Christ, Mary and Grace* (Theological Investigations 1; London 1961) 79-148 ("Theos in the New Testament"), argues that the referent of θεός in the New Testament is God the Father. When Jesus is called θεός, the word is used generically (ibid., 136-138). Rahner discusses the Greek conception of God on pp. 90-92.

(⁴⁶) Justin, *Dialogue* 61; cf. also 128. Earlier Ignatius of Antioch had also explained the unity of Jesus and the Father by saying that Jesus was son of God and Word of God (*Magn.* 8.2). On Ignatius and Justin see J.N.D. KELLY, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York 1960) 92-93, 96-98.

Using similar terms Tertullian explained the relationship between Jesus and the Father in a way eventually adopted by the whole church. In *Apology* 21 he says that the Word, who became flesh in Jesus, proceeded from God and was generated by God, and so is called the Son of God, but is called God because of unity of substance with God. The relationship of God and the Word is like that of the sun and a ray of light going forth from it, no division of substance, but merely an extension⁽⁴⁷⁾. Tertullian used this account of the relationship between Jesus and God to refute the charge that he believed in two Gods in *Praxeas* 13. See also Novatian, *On the Trinity* 30-31.

There is no indication that the author of 2 Peter has anything like this in mind. He has probably not reflected systematically on the relationship between God and Jesus. He speaks of Jesus as God, yet regards Jesus as distinct from God and does not seem to think there is more than one God. When he speaks of the Lord, it might mean either God or Jesus, and sometimes it is not clear which. He stands near the beginning of early Christian use of 'god' in two senses. Most of the time he uses 'god' as a proper noun designating the one who revealed himself in the Hebrew Bible. But he can also call Jesus 'god' in a more general sense, meaning that he belongs to the category of the divine. However, he does not mean either that Jesus is the God who revealed himself in the Hebrew Bible, or that there is more than one God.

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SUMMARY

The Christology of 2 Peter is very exalted. The author calls Jesus God and speaks of his divine power. He uses the title 'Lord' both for Jesus and for God; in the latter cases there is usually some ambiguity about which of them is meant. However, the author presents God as a person distinct from Jesus, and there is no suggestion that the author would affirm the existence of two Gods. The transfiguration revealed Jesus as the son of God. It may be understood as an epiphany of the divine Jesus. It was a moment when Jesus received glory from God, in virtue of which he is praised like God.

2 Peter reflects a stage in early Christian thinking when the word 'god' was used in two ways. Usually it was a proper noun that designated the one who revealed himself in the Hebrew scriptures. Occasionally it was used as a common noun that designated those who belonged to the category of the divine. In this way 2 Peter can call Jesus God without either identifying Jesus with God or seriously affirming the existence of two Gods. Eventually these uses were related in the doctrine of the Trinity.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ See KELLY, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 112-114; A. GRILLMEIER, *Christ in Christian Tradition*. I. From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (Atlanta 1975) 118-121.

RES BIBLIOGRAPHICAE

Joab and David in Double Vision⁽¹⁾

A recent study by S.K. Bietenhard deals with the central, but complex role of Joab in the Succession Narrative of David, and is a revised and abridged version of the dissertation the author submitted to the University of Bern (1996-1997). While Bietenhard shows appreciation of the immense power of this ancient literary work, she also recognizes the historical growth of this text. Thus, the author endeavors to combine the genetic (historico-critical) and structural (literary-semiotic) analysis of Biblical historiography. The present study, then, represents an innovation within the traditions of German scholarship, as it sides with the growing number of studies in the field of OT scholarship that are sensitive to context and take into account rhetorical, structural and general literary considerations.

The aims of this study are unpretentious, as best befits a study that initiates a new outlook. The author presents a survey of the current scholarly methods, their means of dealing with the text, and the different views of the text that result from their application. As such it is a sound presentation. The first part of this book analyses the social and historical framework of the Joab episodes, mainly by means of tradition-historical methods. The second part presents a literary-structural reading in the line of Fokkelman, Conroy, Gunn, Bar-Efrat and Sternberg, while the third part contains a redaction-historical analysis, in the wake of Würthwein, Veijola and Langlamet. Thus, the synchronic analysis precedes the diachronic study, while both points of view provide a twin basis for the author's exegetical conclusions.

The first part of the book discusses the function of the Israelite army leader, beginning with the traditions concerning the מְשִׁיעִים of the premonarchic period (Barak, Gideon, Abimelech, Jephthah, and finally Saul), and proceeding to the institution of the monarchy and the establishment of a regular army. This section offers, *inter alia*, a sensible, sceptical reconstruction of the ancient Israelite army. It also shows that the so-called 'battle account', as established by Richter, does not fit the Joab narratives, since these focus on novelistic detail rather than on the data required by the surmised pattern.

The second part of the book deals with the narrative of Joab's exploits from a literary point of view. At the outset Bietenhard concisely presents the categories that are basic to her analysis, such as plot, character, space

(¹) Sophia Katharina BIETENHARD, *Des Königs General. Die Heerführertraditionen in der vorstaatlichen und frühen staatlichen Zeit und die Joabgestalt in 2 Sam 2–20; 1 Kön 1–2* (OBO 163). Freiburg Schweiz, Universitätsverlag – Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998. xiv-363 p. 16 x 23,5. SFr 108 – DM 130 – ÖS 946,—

and time, the narrator's position, and irony. Thanks to this point of departure the author is able to free Joab from the minor role reserved for him in many discussions, and to represent him, instead, as a full-fledged character. She rightly points to the ambiguity in David's and Joab's position regarding the end of the kingdom of Ishbosheth/Eshbaal, and notes the general's treacherousness, cruelty and self-interest, as well as David's unexpected weakness.

The author presents an able discussion of the Uriah-Bathsheba tale within the framework of Sternberg's thesis. Joab's role in this episode is marked out clearly: he faithfully executes David's commands, while he at the same time implicitly criticizes the king who, in his view, was only too ready to risk the life of a large number of warriors in order to bring about Uriah's death. The discussion certainly hints at the intricate structure of Joab's role and the complexity central to the entire image of David's general. Joab executes the king's orders to the letter, but, experienced army commander as he is, also carefully covers his back, while hinting that the responsibility for issuing the orders lies with the king alone.

One aspect of the picture has not been considered: according to the variant reading of 4QSam^a to 2 Sam 11,3 (אֲרִיָּה דַחְדְּחִי נִשְׂאָה כָּלִי יוֹאָב)⁽²⁾, Uriah was Joab's armor bearer. Whether this plus is accepted or rejected, it must be taken into account in any discussion of Joab's role in this narrative, in particular as this reading sheds new light on the connection between the murder of Uriah and Absalom's death by order of Joab⁽³⁾.

Bietenhard is also conscious of the ambiguities surrounding Joab's role in the Absalom tale. A thorough treatment of David's attitude toward Absalom in 2 Sam 14,1-2 enables her to postulate three possible motivations for the general's intervention: (a) a statesman-like resolution to avoid war with the king of Geshur, Absalom's father in law, who gave the refugee hospitality; (b) a policy of mediation for the sake of David, which is a safe course, in view of Joab's uncertainty regarding David's intentions, (c) a decision to enable Absalom to return to Jerusalem, as Joab is aware how intensely David cares for his fugitive son. According to the latter alternative Bietenhard views this episode as another manifestation of the general's habit to take fatal decisions on his own authority rather than in consultation with David. In addition, she suggests the possibility that Joab only helped Absalom to return in order to prevent the rise of a potential rival, not unlike his performance in the account of Abner's murder. Thus, the ostensible care for David is reckoned to Joab's disfavor.

Bietenhard considers these details evidence for the anti-Joab tendency of this narrative, which thus is thought to express the same bias as the account of Absalom's death, where Joab has the mutinous prince killed, against David's explicit orders.

⁽²⁾ See E.C. ULRICH, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus* (HSM 19; Missoula 1978) 173.

⁽³⁾ On the many-faceted connection between the Bathsheba-Uriah episode and the Absalom tale, in particular on the stylistic level, see F.H. POLAK, "David's Kingship – A Precarious Equilibrium", *Politics and Theopolitics in the Bible and Postbiblical Literature* (eds. H. Graf REVENTLOW – Y. HOFFMAN – B. UFFENHEIMER) (JSOTSS 171; Sheffield 1994) 119-147.

Although this approach could lead to one-sidedness, Bietenhard avoids this danger, as she reviews the different possibilities of interpretation opened by Joab's role. For example, she examines the tension between the political evaluation of the situation, on which level the killing of Absalom is almost self-evident, and the personal level where Joab acts against the king's most passionate wishes. This study also shows with keen perception how this ambiguity reaches its peak in the tale of Amasa's ill-fated endeavors to organize an army for quelling Sheba's rebellion; his murder by the self-seeking Joab, who thus side-steps David's attempt to replace him with a less independent and more acquiescent commander; Joab's success in subduing the mutiny by his relentless pursuit of the rebels; and his successful negotiations with the 'wise woman' from Abel. The author also discerningly points out that Joab himself dominates the account of his murder at the hands of Benaiah, thus forcing Solomon to reveal his cynical 'Lust an der Herrschaft'.

Hence Bietenhard fully acknowledges that Joab embodies the best interests of David's kingdom, even though he also acts without restraint for his own personal good, even when his actions counter David's wishes and explicit orders. In a literary study this inherent ambiguity of Joab's role and character would usually serve as the starting point for a thorough analysis of personality and implied social role. However, at this juncture the author opts for a diachronic approach. Whereas from a literary point of view, the ambiguity of the account of Solomon's accession seems to represent two discording points of view, the diachronic analysis taken up by Bietenhard presents this narrative as the blending of an anti-Solomonic tale, and a pro-Solomonic revision, two different texts that entail two different views of Joab's role. Moreover, in the final discussion of Joab as a literary character, the author prefers to consider the positive and the negative aspects of this figure separately, as two distinct stages in the diachronic development of the narrative. In the end, then, the literary approach is abandoned in favor of genetic analysis. Accordingly, the ambiguity of Joab's character is discarded rather than accounted for. In this respect the author does not present a full-fledged literary study of the role of Joab.

In the third part of the book, the redaction-historical analysis of the narrative closely follows Langlamet's exhaustive studies, taking into account the contributions by Würthwein and Veijola. Along these lines the author distinguishes between: (a) an ancient anti-Solomonic account (S1); (b) a complementary pro-Davidic layer (S2), which yet does not conceal David's weaknesses (291); this layer comprises most of the Succession Narrative, and is probably to be attributed to the same author as S1⁽⁴⁾; (c) a wisdom-theological pro-Solomonic redaction (S3); (d) Deuteronomistic expansions (DtrH).

No doubt, many scholars will be grateful for the résumé of Langlamet's views of the different layers and revisions in the Succession Narrative. However, this discussion fails to answer one of the basic questions which

⁽⁴⁾ F. Langlamet is ready to admit that S2 represents a revision of S1 by the same author: "Absalom et les concubines de son père; recherches sur II Sam 16, 21-22", *RB* 84 (1977) 161-210, esp. 163-165.

must be raised regarding Langlamet's analysis, namely what criteria allow us to assume that we are able to distinguish between the source text, originating with a certain author, and the revisions by that same author, a number of years later. The doubts concerning this method are strengthened by two additional considerations: (a) the best Hebrew narrative style always preserves some of the features of parallelism⁽⁵⁾, which appear to the modern reader as redundant duplication, and thus are taken by the genetic approach as the point of departure for the distinction between different strata; (b) the view of the author-reviser (S2) is more than slightly ambiguous, since he is basically in favor of David, but is also extremely critical of his rule⁽⁶⁾.

It seems to the present recensionist that these considerations impair the redaction-historical conclusions of this study to a certain extent. For instance, a cluster of critical remarks in an otherwise David-friendly context could indicate the basic ambiguity of admiration mingled with criticism, or criticism mitigated by estimation, rather than an anti-Solomonic tendency that reflects a presumed revision. The author does consider this possibility (208-210), but rejects it because of some apparent tensions between diverse political implications of the narrative of Solomon's accession, as well as the tension between the political and the theological framework (205-206).

These perceived tensions, however, are not beyond the antagonisms found in any literary creation. Actually, the redaction-historical position seems not as much dependent on a controlled set of historical considerations as on a certain rhetorical stance. After all, Bietenhard's final preference for a genetic prism is based on the argument that by this method all tendencies are viewed in their own right, whereas the literary integration makes them subordinate to a general theme (210).

Moreover, the point of departure for the author's summary of redaction-historical study of the Succession Narrative, is Rost's assumption that the main question of the tale is 'who will ascend to David's throne?' This angle implies a certain view of the narrator's attitude, and even of the basic narrative plot. Nowadays it is widely acknowledged that the ambiguities in the narrative hardly leave room for Rost's one-sided position. Logically, this insight should lead to a revision of our perception of plot and narrator's point of view, rather than to judgments in the domain of 'higher criticism'. In any case, some of the redaction-historical decisions seem a bit dubious from a literary point of view. For example, if one wishes, with Würthwein and Langlamet, to exclude the rhetoric of Hushai's counsel from the basic

⁽⁵⁾ *Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose* (ed. J.C. DE MOOR – W.G.E. WATSON) (AOAT 42; Kevelaer – Neukirchen-Vluyn 1993) ix-xviii; and especially: W.G.E. WATSON, "Half Line Parallelism as an Indication of Verse in Hebrew Prose", *ibid.*, 331-344; F.H. POLAK, "On Prose and Poetry in the Book of Job", *JANES* 24 (1996) 61-97, esp. 61-76.

⁽⁶⁾ Moreover, F. Langlamet admits of the possibility that the anti-Solomonic account (S1) contains residues of sympathy for David which may imply that the narrator was a disappointed follower of the king rather than an full-blown opponent: "Pour ou contre Salomon? La rédaction prosalomonique de I Rois, 1-2," *RB* 83 (1976) 321-380, 481-528, esp. 525-526. If all characterizations are ambiguous, how are we to distinguish between: (a) a polemic account by a disappointed but empathic critic, (b) reflections by a critical follower, (c) apologetic refutation or relativization of criticism?

narrative, one has to explain who convinced Absalom to take part in the attack on David, for Ahitophel's advice does not leave any room for the participation of the newly installed king. And which pro-Davidic or pro-Solomonic account needs David's trusted companion to transfer Absalom to the battle field where he was to die? An alternative view might represent the Hushai episode as a very intricate, deeply ambiguous construction on the level of plot and divine retribution, rather than as a secondary expansion. By the same token one could ask why the description of David as the 'compassionate, persecuted, suffering and loving father' should be specifically characteristic of the pro-Solomonic redactor (S3). Could one imagine any picture of David that does not encompass these features together with other traits?

In this respect, the author's final evaluation of Joab's role in the David narrative, and, indeed, of the David narrative itself, is extremely revealing. The basic ambiguities are still represented as characteristic of most if not all of the strata (325-327, 329-331). The evaluation itself, however, is formulated in literary rather than in historico-critical terms. In the end, then, the emerging picture is mainly based on the findings of structural, literary-semiotic analysis, for which the David narrative represents a 'Precarious Equilibrium.'

The present study undoubtedly represents important progress, thanks to its sensitivity to various structural, semantic and pragmatic aspects of the David narrative and the attempt at a comprehensive presentation of Joab's role and personality.

However, the literary analysis could have been more comprehensive. This aspect of Bietenhard's study is based mainly on plot structure and theme, with strikingly little attention to stylistic study. Moreover, a literary study should discuss psychological complexity, and evaluate the extent to which different conflicting features are integrated into one complex picture of a 'round' personality. Lastly, the picture of Joab's cruelty and treacherousness is much augmented by means of the contrast with Abner's honesty, straightforwardness, and concern for human life (he repeatedly warns Asahel before killing his challenger in an act of self-defense). By the same token, the scenes of the killing of Abner, Absalom and Amasa are dominated by a network of analogies and commonalities that reach their high point in Amasa's murder. This network reflects on all killing scenes and in particular on the death of Absalom. Analogy and contrast, then, are important building stones for the characterization of Joab.

The highly complex issue of the relationship between genetic analysis and literary scrutiny, mainly synchronic of character, merits further discussion. This is not only a question of precedence. For one, 'structural analysis' (loosely used in the broad sense) is able to encompass the diachronic dimension by way of palimpsest (Genette), as the hypergraph (T2, the 'redaction layer') absorbs the hypogram (T1, the 'ancient source') in one comprehensive text. Unlike 'higher criticism' this approach focuses on the semiotic and pragmatic relationship between the components of the palimpsest, and thus highlights 'composite artistry' (Alter), rather than the genesis of the text as such.

To a certain extent, this is a matter of rhetorical stance. As Fokkelman

succinctly puts it, 'Suspicious for the diachronist, enthralling for the synchronist' (?). Is this a subjective approach? We all must hope so. 'Making sense of the text' is a cognitive process, conditioned by the involvement of the cogitating subject. Abandoning the 'thinking heart' of the narrative leaves one with a mass of technicalities, innumerable parts of a huge puzzle never to be assembled, out of disregard for the semantics of any possibly emerging picture. Nevertheless, interpretation is also connected with technical issues, such as the recognition of rhetorical figures. According to the literary approach, repetition (with or without variegation) is such a figure, involving point of view and other semantic and pragmatic intricacies. This view is corroborated by the obvious fact that repetition is a well-attested pattern in Ugaritic, Akkadian and Sumerian literature. In the view of classical 'higher criticism', on the other hand, no such figure is recognized: repetition is used as one of the main criteria for the distinction between different layers, sources, or traditions. These conflicting attitudes hardly leave any room for compromise. In a study with literary aspirations, repetition is first of all viewed from the semiotic-pragmatic angle. Lack of consistency may also necessitate a literary, semantic approach, since at least a number of presumed contradictions seem to involve differences in point of view (e.g., the Amalekite's account of Saul's death in comparison with the narrator's account). Such divergences, then, should not be treated one-sidedly as a matter of distinction between various layers.

In these issues the present study often takes sides with the genetic approach, in the tradition of redaction history. The methods of literary scrutiny, then, are met halfway. This meeting itself, however, constitutes an important achievement. Hopefully many scholars in the tradition of 'higher criticism' and redaction-history will follow suit.

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(?) J.P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel*. I. King David (II Sam. 9-20 & I Kings 1-2) (Assen 1981) 413, n. 1; 417-419.

RECENSIONES

Vetus Testamentum

Markus WITTE, *Die biblische Urgeschichte. Redaktions- und theologiegeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu Genesis 1,1–11,26* (BZAW 265). Berlin – New York, W. de Gruyter, 1998. ix-388 p. 15,5 × 23. DM 198 – ÖS 1445 – SFr 176 – \$116.00

Die Monographie von M. Witte (Verf.) beginnt mit dem Satz: "Zu den wichtigsten Fragen der gegenwärtigen Pentateuchkritik gehört die Bestimmung des Wesens, der Herkunft und des Profils der Endredaktion der einzelnen Bücher wie des Gesamtwerkes". So macht sich der Verf. auf die Suche nach einem Endredaktor in der Urgeschichte der Genesis, die er auf 1,1–9,29 als "eigentliche Urgeschichte" und eine "Zwischenzeit" in 10,1–11,26 einschränkt, so daß sich die Untersuchung auf 1,1–11,26 bezieht. Vor Beginn fallen aber schon zwei alles Weitere determinierende Vorentscheidungen. Der Endredaktion sollen zwei Überlieferungsstränge vorgegeben sein, ein priesterschriftlicher (P) und ein nichtpriesterschriftlicher (n-P), den der Verf. konventionell als "jahwistisch" bezeichnet. Die Endredaktion ist in jedem Falle weder mit der priesterschriftlichen noch der jahwistischen Überlieferung identisch. Schließlich soll die Endredaktion nur im Horizont der Urgeschichte, nicht aber des Pentateuch untersucht werden, so daß die Frage, ob es sich um eine Pentateuch- oder Hexateuchredaktion handelt, von vornherein mit einem *ignoramus* versehen wird.

In einem ersten Schritt werden die Texte analysiert, "die eindeutig als redaktionelle Brücken zwischen der 'priesterlichen' und der 'jahwistischen' Schicht erkennbar sind". Dabei kommt 2,4, und 4,25-26 eine Schlüsselstellung zu, da hier Würfel in der Frage fallen, wie die beiden Schöpfungsberichte sowie die "jahwistische" Kainitentafel und die "priesterliche" Adamtoledot literaturhistorisch zueinander in Beziehung zu setzen sind und sich zu einer "Endredaktion" verhalten.

Durch Vorgaben determiniert, die an der klassischen Urkundenhypothese orientiert sind, wird 2,4 literarkritisch wieder auf zwei Schichten aufgeteilt, das aber um den Preis, daß V. 4a als Überschrift vor 1,1 umgesetzt und V. 4b in seiner Bedeutung uminterpretiert worden sei. Damit werden erneut die Verlegenheitslösungen der Urkundenhypothese bemüht und die palindromische Gestalt des Verses 2,4 als Einheit ebenso überspielt wie die Tatsache, daß 2,4-8 syntaktisch die nächste Parallele in 1,3-8 hat, mit קים in Verbindung mit dem Temporalsatz wie in 5,1 auf die

voranstehende Erzählung in 1,1–2,3 zurückweist, was für die Anknüpfung an 1,1–2,3 spricht, eine Voranstellung von 2,4a vor 1,1 aber gerade ausschließt, und אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים wie stets einen folgenden Abschnitt einleitet. V. 4 ist redaktionelle Überleitung zwischen dem Schöpfungsbericht 1,1–2,3, 2,5 syntaktisch aber nicht ohne 2,4 möglich, so daß der Schöpfungsbericht 2,4–3,24 postpriesterschriftlich im Kontext steht. Der Verf. will dagegen nur eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Modifizierung der klassischen Urkundenhypothese und bedient sich dazu durchgängig ihrer Argumentationsmuster. So wird die Gottesbezeichnung "JHWH Elohim" dem Endredaktor zugeschrieben, der sie sek. in 2,4b.7.9,15f.18–19.21–22; 3,8–9.13.21–23 wie 4,25–26; 6,1–4 zusammen mit Ergänzungen in der Fluterzählung (6,7aβy; 7,1b.3.8f.23aα*β) mit dem Ziel des "glatteren Übergangs" zwischen J und P eingefügt haben soll. Daß sich alle diese der Endredaktion zugeschriebenen Einschübe in traditionellem J-Material, nicht aber in P finden, weckt Zweifel an der Voraussetzung, mit der der Verf. die Analyse begonnen hat, zumal er nun auch 9,18b.20*.22aα.23*.26a*.27 als "Abstimmung" der Noah-Erzählung 9,20–26* mit der Noah-Genealogie (9,18; 10,1–32) eingefügt sieht.

In einem zweiten Schritt wendet sich der Verf. P und J zu mit dem in Grundzügen überzeugenden Ergebnis, daß 1,1–2,3*; 2,4a; 5,1–32*; 6–9*; 10,1–32* eine "Quelle P", nicht Bearbeitungsschicht, sei, die auf Fortsetzung angelegt ist und sich damit von der jahwistischen Urgeschichte 2,4b–4,24; 6,5–8,22, die durch 2,4b; 8,22 abschließend gerahmt und mit 9,20–26; 10*; 11,1–9 endredaktionell in P eingefügt worden sei, unterscheidet. Die Differenzen zwischen 9,20–27 und der n-P-Fluterzählung sind stets notiert worden. Die Zuweisung zu unterschiedlichen literarischen Schichten, da sich keine "voredredaktionellen Brücken" ausweisen lassen, ist ein Zirkelschluß, nachdem der literarische Zusammenhang zwischen P und n-P von vornherein ausgeschlossen und die "Endredaktion" von n-P literarisch getrennt wurde. Die glattere Lösung ist auch hier, daß P literarische Grundlage ist, die durch n-P als Redaktion unter Aufnahme von älterem Material überarbeitet wurde und mit 12,1–3 verbunden ist. Die von der älteren Forschung J zugeschriebenen Bezüge zu Gen 12 werden vom Verf. mit dem Argument fehlenden literarischen Zusammenhanges, den er selbst aufgebrochen hat, abgewiesen. In der Konsequenz kann der Verf. seinen "Endredaktor" der Urgeschichte nicht mehr mit postpriesterschriftlichen Redaktionen im Pentateuch vermitteln und erklärt ihn für literarisch unabhängig im Pentateuch.

In einem dritten Schritt soll dieser Redaktor (R^{UG}) literaturhistorisch und theologisch eingeordnet werden. Sein theologisches Programm sei die Vorstellung vom Heil in Gestalt des Tempels als gegenwärtig erfahrbaren Ersatz für das verlorene Paradies und der durch Noah vermittelte Segen und ewige "Bund" als Surrogat für das "ewige Leben". Dies soll nun spätweisheitliche Theologie sein, die spätdtr Motive inkorporiert habe. Der Verf. datiert diese Redaktion dieser vom übrigen Pentateuch unabhängigen Urgeschichte aufgrund von 9,27; 11,1–9, die den Alexanderzug und die Hellenisierung von Samaria und Jerusalem voraussetzen, ins ausgehende 4. Jh.

Die Monographie ist gegenüber Ansätzen, die die post-P-Redaktionen

nur mechanisch ohne eigenes theologisches Konzept verstehen (O. Eißfeldt, M. Noth, C. Levin u. a.) ein erheblicher Fortschritt, wenn der Verf. mit der Einlage einer J-Urgeschichte in eine Quelle P durch einen theologisch produktiven Redaktor rechnet. Auch bietet er zahlreiche wertvolle Beobachtungen zu Einzelaspekten. Ihre Grenze hat die Monographie in der schmalen Textbasis. Redaktionsgeschichte im Pentateuch ist nur auf der Basis des gesamten Pentateuch zu betreiben. Die Abkoppelung des R^{UG} vom übrigen Pentateuch ist die unvermeidliche Konsequenz aus der Begrenzung der Textbasis. Wie aber soll man sich einen postpriesterschriftlichen Redaktor vorstellen, der nur in der Urgeschichte arbeitet, nachdem diese aber, wie der Verf. selbst einräumt, seit P bereits Teil eines größeren literarischen Ganzen ist, das zumindest auch Teile des Buches Exodus einschließt? Weiter wird der Wert der Monographie durch undiskutierte Grundentscheidungen wie die der literarischen Unabhängigkeit von P und J, die aus der Urkundenhypothese stammen, belastet. Sie lassen dem Redaktor kein theologisches Profil, das mit dem übrigen Pentateuch vermittelbar wäre, ist doch eine spätweisheitliche Redaktion des gesamten Pentateuch ohne Basis. Der Verf. folgt dem gängigen Trend der Pentateuchforschung der letzten zwei Jahrhunderte, das Problem des Pentateuch von der Urgeschichte aus zu lösen, und verliert dabei den Zusammenhang mit dem Pentateuch. In diesem Sinne endet der Verf. in einer Aporie, die nur oberflächlich mit dem Hinweis, in Gen 14 könnte R^{UG} noch einmal postredaktionell zu Wort kommen, verdeckt wird.

Statt immer wieder die Literaturgeschichte des Pentateuch von seinen Anfängen anzugehen, sollte der Ansatz bei seinem Abschluß in Dtn 31–34 (postdtr) gewählt werden. Dabei zeigt sich, daß postpriesterschriftlich zwischen einer Hexateuch- und einer Pentateuchredaktion zu differenzieren ist, beide Redaktionen aber ein theologisches Profil zeigen, das mit den späten Schichten des Buches Ezechiel verwandt ist. Das aber gibt den Beziehungen von R^{UG} zu Ez 28,11–19; 32,27; 47* Gewicht, aber auch zu Texten wie Gen 18,19.21; Num 13,32–33; 16,22; 27,16; Dtn 4,27; 32,8, die allesamt in den Horizont postpriesterschriftlicher Redaktionsgeschichte und ihrer Rezeptionen im Pentateuch gehören. Die Verortung der Redaktion auf der Schnittlinie von spätdtr und spätweisheitlicher Theologie erweist sich als Kurzschuß, weil die Mehrzahl der angeführten Belege wie die genannten postdtr und postpriesterschriftlich ist. Und wie soll sich auch auf dieser Schnittstelle angesiedelt das vom Verf. herausgearbeitete Kerygma des R^{UG} mit dem Tempel als Ersatz für das verlorene Paradies erklären, wenn nicht P vorausgesetzt ist. Dieser Redaktor arbeitet auf einer Schnittstelle von priesterlichem und weisheitlichem Denken, und das ist für die priesterlichen Schriftgelehrten von Hexateuch- und Pentateuchredaktion insgesamt charakteristisch. Exegesierte man mit einer gesamt-pentateuchischen Perspektive, wird schließlich deutlich, daß die post-P-Redaktionen in der Urgeschichte genau das Verfahren angewandt haben, nämlich bei der Überarbeitung von P die Quelle von P einzuarbeiten, dessen sie sich auch an anderer Stelle, etwa wenn sie das Bundesbuch als Quelle des Dtn postpriesterschriftlich in die Sinaiperikope einfügten, bedienten. Gen 2–3 wurde von P in Gen 1 revidiert und postpriesterschriftlich durch 2,4 mit Gen 1 verknüpft rezipiert. Erkennt man dieses Verfahren der post-

P-Redaktionen, sich der Quellen ihrer Quellen (P) zu bedienen, lichtet sich die Literaturgeschichte von Gen 1–3 ebenso wie die von Gen 6–8. Die postpriesterschriftliche Redaktionsgeschichte von Gen 1–9 bleibt weiter auf der Agenda der Forschung. Sie ist in einen größeren Horizont als den vom Verf. anvisierten zu stellen und nur so zu lösen. Der Verf. hatte eingangs festgestellt, "die Bestimmung des Wesens der Herkunft und des Profils der Endredaktion der einzelnen Bücher wie des Gesamtwerks" des Pentateuch gehöre "zu den wichtigsten Fragen der gegenwärtigen Pentateuchkritik". Wird die "Endredaktion" der Urgeschichte aus der des Pentateuch, dessen Teil sie aber ist, gelöst, so bleibt es Aufgabe der zukünftigen Forschung, die Beobachtungen des Verf. in diesen Fragehorizont zu integrieren.

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Raymond DE HOOP, *Genesis 49 in its Literary and Historical Context* (OTS 39). Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1999. xvi-695 p. 16,3 × 24,5. Dfl 340 – \$200.00

In this study of Gen 49 the author employs an orderly approach, surveying the work of previous scholars and supporting original assertions. Its title does not suggest the comprehensiveness of the volume, nor its eclectic inclusion of various approaches to textual study. The work begins with a review of the history of interpretation of Gen 49. De Hoop's own analysis opens with text critical questions and a translation. A poetic analysis follows. The form critical genre, 'tribal sayings', receives critical attention in what constitutes a challenge of its applicability to the pericope. Next, the author conducts a synchronic reading of Gen 49 and its literary framework. The diachronic reading which follows, builds on the findings of the synchronic reading and lays the foundation for some original claims regarding the historical setting of Gen 49 and its redactional layers. Each of these tasks corresponds to a substantial chapter of the work — six tasks in six chapters.

Each chapter ends with a section titled "Recapitulation" which reviews the findings and suggestions essential to the continuation of the arguments. The author avoids anticipating the conclusions of later chapters. In this way he illustrates the reasoned steps in his argument. However, much of the necessary background for the claims remains hidden in the specifics of previous chapters. As a result, the details of each argument are at times difficult to follow. It would be helpful to have his thesis for each chapter stated from the start of the chapter, so that the reader could note the essential conclusions.

The previous remarks evaluate the book in terms of its rhetorical effectiveness. The volume offers the specialist much more than the author's

original findings. The book may also be read as a summary of research on Gen 49. The value of the book as a reference tool equals or exceeds the value of its unique contributions to ongoing research. Both are considerable in scope and import.

The length of the work and complexity of the various arguments makes the book unwieldy. It could easily be cast in two volumes or major sections: one containing the review of previous interpretation and current claims, and the second detailing the departure of de Hoop from consensus and building the arguments for his readings. Yet his arguments would not have the same impact, if separated from the critical background, in part because of the way de Hoop selectively grasps precise suggestions to build into his discussions. In a few cases the treatment of passages is extended and tangential issues receive too much attention, as in the remarks on philology in pages 7-26. Certainly, it is preferable to err on the side of comprehensiveness than precision. De Hoop attempts to provide encyclopedic attention to the text at hand, rather than limiting attention to items immediately pertinent to his claims. The technicality of the work is compounded by the combination of methods employed — from text criticism to literary reading, from form and source criticism to poetic analysis. This feature stands as another example of the appeal of de Hoop's work as a reference, in this case for those attempting any of the several approaches to interpretation employed. This will be a resource that current interpreters of Gen 49 cannot afford to overlook, both because of its overview of scholarship and its competent employment of various methodological approaches.

It is refreshing to see the combination of traditional approaches with contemporary readings. De Hoop makes use of the synchronic reading to challenge or confirm aspects of the historical criticism. Clearly, de Hoop does not believe that the newer approaches exercise more authority, but recognizes that they may be equally helpful. For example, general features noted in the macrostructure of Gen 47-49 inform the interpretation of individual verses. De Hoop uses the literary context to supply the needed situational context for the blessing. The narrative of Gen 47,29-48,1 sets the stage for Gen 49 with its indication that Jacob is near death. This recognition lends evidence that leads to claims for specific readings of individual verses. Previous historical approaches divorced the blessing from its literary context. Yet the editor(s) surely intended this connection.

De Hoop's diversified approach to interpretation suggests a productive direction for current textual studies. It is time for scholars to seek an explicit combination of the diachronic and synchronic readings of all biblical texts. We cannot expect each critic to be equally adept at both, although the work under review does achieve remarkable balance. We may look forward to dialogue involving the leading specialists on specific passages of biblical literature from both camps. If each offered a definitive reading, from the perspective of one's own interpretive strategy, these could be compared and the findings synthesized in some limited ways. Caution should be exercised so that the methods themselves don't compete, that is, one method should not be conceived as a panacea to all the limitations of the other. They operate in different fields and therefore cannot absolutely prove or

invalidate the other's claims. Such inclusive studies commonly appear in dissertations, yet many of these present methodological studies which treat the text only in illustrative fashion.

De Hoop also presents a quite credible portrait of the poetic structure of Gen 49. He finds a convincing 'chain of parallels' which link the smaller canticles to the whole of Jacob's blessing (240). These notations on the poetic design of the chapter lend support to textual and historical evidence for unity. They also help to confirm his contention that the Joseph saying blends with general context, rather than standing as a *Fremdkörper* within the blessing (241).

De Hoop rejects Gunkel's identification of the contents of the blessing as 'tribal sayings.' Instead, he proposes the designation, 'testamentary sayings.' He implied that the word ברכה could be translated 'testamentary saying' in Gen 49 (315). De Hoop investigated the 'Umwelt' for comparable sayings. He concluded that tribal sayings as identified by form critics are attested in later Arabian literature but not in the ancient Near East. On this basis, he called into question their appearance in the Hebrew Bible (283), a position confirmed by S. Beyerle in *Der Mosesegen im Deuteronomium: Eine text-, kompositions- und formkritische Studie zu Deuteronomium 33* (BZAW 250; Berlin 1997). This claim, like the one concerning other ancient Near Eastern literature was based on a careful review of relevant texts. One wonders whether, apart from a polished literary form, tribal sayings existed as simple epithets characterizing the nature of a people group. Would we expect such sayings to survive in inscriptional evidence, especially since most such sayings arose from competing groups who would not have cast their rivals in complimentary terms? We cannot eliminate the possibility of such a hypothetical form simply because such sayings do not occur as edited lists. This is not to disagree with de Hoop's claim that the genre 'testamentary saying' characterizes the current form of Gen 49 more precisely than the term, 'tribal sayings.' The former rests on more confirmation in parallel texts and renders more potential for further study. More relevant to de Hoop's purposes, the 'testamentary saying' offers greater potential for synchronic analysis both on the level of macrostructure and microstructure. More limited, 'tribal sayings', offer little evidence of the synthetic nature of the literary unit. De Hoop sought to combine interest in literary structure and sociological function, whereas form criticism emphasized the sociological function. For this reason, form criticism showed more interest in primitive or hypothetical forms. One further component in his argument for the 'testamentary saying' identification involves the use of the future tense. Tribal sayings would typically focus on the past. Of course, Hebrew grammar does not provide identification of tense. Instead, the determination of tense depends on the rhetorical analysis of the text. It is the dramatic scene itself — the last saying of the dying patriarch — which supplies evidence of the future tense.

De Hoop's comparative study of similar texts provides strong support for his form critical claims. His attention to the cultural context yields valuable information for subsequent interpreters. His approach suggests that future genre identification should depend on actual data from related times and places. While this is not always plausible, the caution suggested should

always be kept in mind. Until evidence of a given genre is discovered it remains more or less hypothetical.

The synchronic reading given in chap. 4 includes an attempt to read Gen 49 as a unit integrated with the larger context of the Deathbed Episode (Gen 47,29–49,33). In pursuit of this goal the entire text is read as a testament. Building upon the findings of Wenham (G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50* [WBC 2; Waco 1987] 459), de Hoop noted the converging of the Jacob narrative and the Joseph narrative in the last three chapters of Genesis. Both come to their end in chap. 49. Based on the four scenes suggested by Skinner (J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* [ICC; Edinburgh 1930] 502), de Hoop recognized the following chiasmic structure:

- A 47,29-31 instructions for the funeral
- B 48,1-22 adoption and blessing
- B' 49,1-28 blessing
- A' 49,29-33 instructions for the funeral (318).

Amid this discussion de Hoop made the more questionable claim that the entire story of Joseph (Gen 37–50) treats the issue of whether Joseph will actually 'be king over his brothers' as in 37,8.10. This claim partially rests on a rather specific textual reading of 49,25, translating the problematic פֶּרֶא as 'bullcalf' and understanding this as a reference to royalty (354). Two more common suggestions for translation are 'wild ass' (as in the Jewish Publication Society translation) and 'fruitful bow' (as in New Revised Standard Version). Generally, his suggestion that 'ideologically, the negative elements for Joseph correspond with the favoured position of Judah in Gen 49 and strengthened the latter's position' (364) is well defended. In its present form Gen 49 supported the claims of the first born Judah, lest Joseph who gained prominence in Gen 37–48, eclipse the proper heir to patriarchal authority. De Hoop suggested that any new analysis of Joseph's story must start with the 'connection between Story and Blessing.' He also emphasized the need to look at entire Joseph complex as a unity (426).

The volume contains numerous errors of spelling and typography, and an equal number of grammatical errors. A casual editorial reading yielded eighteen of each. Certainly, there are many more. Most of the errors in usage stemmed from the difficulty of writing in a secondary language, but these could have been corrected by the style editor.

The proposal of the two layers of editing seems sound in itself. Some question may be raised regarding the ultimate authority of such specific claims for a passage which exhibits so many enigmatic features. By contrast, understanding the redaction in terms of traditional form critical categories does offer the advantage of situating the text within known canons of scholarship, lending at least the appearance of order. This is not to challenge the legitimacy of de Hoop's claims, but the development of the text could be construed in such an endless variety of ways that there seems little possibility this new suggestion, well defended as it is, offers a standard for future discussion.

This work offers an appealing contrast to many contemporary studies

which concentrate on synchronic analysis without detailed investigation of previous scholarship. It presents a rather definitive, self-contained investigation which will prove indispensable to those studying Gen 49 for years to come, because of its thorough review of earlier interpretation. Any specialist in Genesis will find the volume useful. While de Hoop's specific claims for the redaction of Gen 49 remain open to question, one could argue that this is true for most critical interpretations. The author can be commended for providing such exhaustive coverage of the issues important for the understanding of the blessing of Jacob.

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Jonathan E. DYCK, *The Theocratic Ideology of the Chronicler* (Biblical Interpretation 33). Leiden – Boston – Köln, E.J. Brill, 1998. xii-256 p. 16,5 × 24,5

Die Sheffielder Studie, mit der Jonathan E. Dyck, den PhD-Grad erlangt hat, untersucht den theologischen und gesellschaftlichen Entwurf der Chronikbücher unter dem Leitgedanken der *theokratischen Ideologie*. Die Studie nimmt mit dem Stichwort Theokratie einen zentralen Begriff auf, mit dem O. Plöger und P.D. Hanson die theologisch-soziologischen Strömungen in der Zeit des Zweiten Tempels bezeichnen; der Begriff seinerseits geht auf Josephus zurück. D. geht jedoch eigene Wege, indem zunächst grundsätzlich nach der Pragmatik von Texten und den Implikationen des Ideologiebegriffs gefragt wird (Kap. 1 und 2). D. führt hier vor allem Gedanken von Ricoeur weiter, dessen hermeneutische Überlegungen zur Identität mit der Frage nach der soziologischen Tragweite ideologischer Vorstellungen verbunden werden. Daß eine Ideologie auf das gesellschaftliche Sozialgefüge ausgerichtet ist, läßt D. sich als Leitfaden für die Lektüre der Chronik vorgeben, die er als machstabilisierendes Literaturwerk der einflußreichen Kreise in Juda bewertet. So legt D. einerseits sozial-soziologische Untersuchungen zum perserzeitlichen Juda und andererseits eine synchrone Analyse ausgewählter Textpassagen der Chronik vor.

Mit Hilfe des Ideologie-Modells befragt D. in drei thematischen Anläufen die Chronik. Zunächst wird nach dem chr Verständnis der Identität Israels gefragt (unter Aufnahme von 2 Chr 36, Esra 1–6; 9–10 und Neh 13), die D. mit der Herkunft aus dem Exil bestimmt sieht (Kap. 3). Haben die Rückkehrer im Exil ihre Identität gewonnen, so haben sie nach ihrer Ankunft in Palästina einen Abgrenzungsprozeß gegenüber der dortigen Landbevölkerung zu leisten. In diesem Prozeß werden die wesentlichen Einsichten zur Identität weitertradiert und ausgebaut.

Sodann wird das Sozialgefüge Judas untersucht, das D. unter den

Kategorien "Legitimation" und "Verzerrung" (Kap. 4–5) darstellt. Im 4. Kap. untersucht D. 1 Chr 1; 9; 10; 13,1–5; 16; 17; 21 synchron und fragt nach den theokratischen Elementen in 2 Chronik. Kap. 5 hingegen basiert auf Esra/Nehemia, denen D. wesentliche und verlässliche Informationen über das soziale Gefüge des perserzeitlichen Juda entnimmt. D. knüpft an die Idee einer persischen Reichsautorisation (Frei, Koch) an. Folgt er dabei den in der Chronik bzw. Esr/Neh dargestellten Leitungsstrukturen der Monarchie und Hierokratie der Königszeit bzw. der früh-nachexilischen Zeit, so entsteht ein Modell der Gesellschaftsform des perserzeitlichen Israel, deren Basis in den einzelnen Familien und ihren Mitgliedern besteht und sich bis hin zur Tempelhierokratie aufbaut.

Im abschließenden 6. Kapitel stellt D. den Ertrag seiner Untersuchungen dar. In den Mittelpunkt wird die chronistische Variante des salomonischen Tempelweihgebets in 2 Chr 7,12b–16a gerückt, in der sich alle Elemente des sozialen und religiösen Gesamtgefüges des theokratischen Konzepts der Chronik verbinden, wie auch unter Salomo "the full realization of the ideal theocratic state" (152) anzutreffen sei.

Mit diesem Theokratiekonzept entwirft D. ein soziologisches Gesamtbild, das alle Teile der Gesellschaft Judas zu integrieren sucht. Über die bekannten Modelle der Theokratie geht er insofern hinaus, als an der Spitze dieses Gesamtkonzepts Jahwe selbst steht. Jahwe ist in der Chronik Israels eigentlicher und universaler König und damit seine höchste Autorität (vgl. 1 Chr 29,23; 2 Chr 9,8; 13,8; s.a. 1 Chr 17,14; 28,5; 29,11–12). Jahwes Königtum ist in der Regentschaft der Könige Judas abgebildet, die ihre Herrschaft als eine von Gott abgeleitete und gewährte Herrschaft wahrnehmen. Ihnen zur Seite stehen die Priester und das gesamte hierarchisch gestufte Tempelpersonal, das für den Kult und den Tempel als "the focal point of a system of hierarchies within the community" (212) zuständig ist. Der Tempel als Dreh- und Angelpunkt bildet damit das Zentrum der Theokratie; als zentrale Wirkungsstätte Jahwes gehen alle Fäden im sozialen und theologischen Gefüge Israels vom Tempel aus. Vom Tempel aus entwickelt und propagiert das Tempelpersonal eine Ideologie zur Legitimation der Leitungsfunktionen und ihrer Träger. Damit soll eine Durchsetzung dieses Leitungsanspruches im gesamten Volk ermöglicht werden. Als Zielpunkt der theokratischen Ideologie ist die gesamte Gesellschaft im Blick. Die Führungselite des perserzeitlichen Juda ist nach D. dreigeteilt und setzt sich aus Repräsentanten der Sippenhäupter, der leitenden Verwaltungsbeamten und dem höheren Klerus zusammen. Die Familiensippen (בית אבות) mit ihren einzelnen Mitgliedern charakterisiert D. als kleinste soziale Einheit. Damit baut er auf ähnlichen Konzepten von Weinberg und Albertz auf. In unmittelbarem Zusammenhang mit der kleinsten sozialen Einheit der Gesellschaft stellt D. auch das Land Israels, das nicht nur als das von Gott verliehene Erbteil betrachtet wird, sondern Ausweis des universalen Königtums Jahwes ist, das sich bis in die fundamentalen Lebensstrukturen hinein erstreckt.

Die Ideologie der führenden Kreise stärkt somit das Konzept der Theokratie "as bridging the gap between claim and belief" ihrer Autorität (214). Diesem Zweck dienen auch die theologischen Aspekte der Chronik, die D. mit der Forschung (vgl. Hanson, Japhet, Johnstone, Kelly, Willi,

Williamson) in den zentralen Topoi Gnade und Liebe Gottes, Gott-Suchen, Gottesdienst und Tempel, Herkunft Israels aus dem Exils mit anschließender Restauration, Vergeltung und Eschatologie ausmacht. Auch die Vorstellung von "all Israel" gehört hierzu, also eines gesamtheitlichen Volkes, das über alle Zeiten in Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft wie auch über alle Orte innerhalb und außerhalb Judas hinweg als zusammenhängende Einheit betrachtet wird; D. verschärft diese bekannte Orientierung durch eine universale Ausweitung, die er in seinem theokratischen Modell mit Jahwe als Weltherrscher reflektiert sieht. Doch überschätzt dies nicht die Perspektive der Chronik, wenn damit der auf die perserzeitliche Provinz Jehud begrenzte Blickwinkel der Chronik aufgesprengt wird? Auch wenn man die Reichweite von Jahwes Königtum über Palästina hinausreichen sieht, so sind die theologischen Interpretationen dieser Ausweitung innerhalb der Chronik bestenfalls angedacht.

Wenn D. die theokratische Ideologie als identitätsstiftend begreift, so gehört er damit zu den Forschern, die jüngst die Frage nach Israels Identität in der zweiten Hälfte der Perserzeit (zweite Hälfte 5. Jh. / erste Hälfte 4. Jh.) als entscheidendes Grunddatum für die Zeit des Zweiten Tempels erachten (z. B. Ben Zvi, Willi). Ausgelöst durch die Gründung der Provinz Jehud in der Mitte des 5. Jh., ringt Israel um seine Identität, sucht nach Abgrenzung gegenüber außen und nach innerer Stabilität sowie einem eigenen Profil. Die Suche nach Identität in der zweiten Hälfte der Perserzeit bildet den Anlaß, über die Vergangenheit erneut nachzudenken und aus ihr Wegweisung für die Gegenwart zu entnehmen. In diesen aktuell diskutierten Fragen hat D. einen eigenen Beitrag zur Erforschung der Zeit des Zweiten Tempels geliefert. Inwiefern man diesen jedoch mit dem Begriff der Ideologie verbinden kann, ist eine andere Frage, deren Beantwortung auch von den Kreisen, in denen die Chronik entstanden ist, abhängt.

D. entwirft ein harmonisches Gesamtkonzept, das Politik und Theologie in Theokratie und Ideologie zu verbinden sucht und damit Leitlinien für die Geschichtsdarstellung der Chronik entwickelt. Doch lassen sich auch kritische Stimmen beibringen, die fragen, ob die Chronik wirklich ein so konformes gesellschaftliches Konzept propagiert, wie es D. darstellt. In der Chronik selbst gibt es Passagen, die gegen diese Harmonie intervenieren und eine latente Kritik an den Machtansprüchen äußern. Diese Kritik betrifft freilich nicht das gesamte System, sondern ist vorwiegend gegen die Priesterschaft und ihren Anspruch auf Machtpositionen gerichtet. Wie sich anhand von Spannungen innerhalb der Chronik aufzeigen läßt, wird von Seiten der Leviten, die sich zunehmend zu den administrativen Aufgaben hin ausrichten (vgl. 1 Chr 23,4; 26,29–32; 2 Chr 19,8.11; 34,13) und darin ihre Einflußmöglichkeiten auf die Gesellschaft wahrnehmen, ein Anspruch auf Mitgestaltung laut. Dieser Anspruch wird aber eher im pragmatischen Bereich anzusiedeln sein, als daß er sich in bestimmten Gremien, wie D. sie sich als Leitungsfunktionen vorstellt, niedergeschlagen hätte. So zeigen sich in der Chronik Spannungen und Brüche in der auf den ersten Blick harmonisch scheinenden Konzeption, die eine stärkere soziologische Differenzierung erforderlich machen.

Die Chronik, die immer wieder das Wirken der Leviten in den Vordergrund stellt und ihnen zunehmend mehr Aufgaben überträgt, propagiert damit die Interessen der Leviten und nicht die der Priesterschaft im Sinn von D. Dann kann man aber fragen, ob die Chronik wirklich insgesamt ideologisch machstabilisierend angelegt war. Zwar bilden Tempel und Gottesdienst ein wesentliches Fundament des gesellschaftlichen und religiösen Lebens, doch ist davon aus Sicht der Chronik m. E. ein machtpolitisches Bestreben der Priesterschaft, vor allem im Hinblick auf die immer dominierender werdende Position des Hohenpriesters, abzurücken. Die Chronik ist demnach nicht mit der sakralen Institution der Priesterschaft zu verbinden, sondern eher interessiert an der Entwicklung einer Einflußnahme der Leviten in den ihnen zugänglichen Bereichen der praktischen Gestaltung.

Trotz der Rückfragen ist das Werk von D. mit seinen anregenden Analysen zweifelsohne zur Lektüre zu empfehlen; es ist spannend geschrieben und gut zu lesen. Durch präzise Zusammenfassungen werden Leser und Leserinnen durch die Lektüre behutsam geleitet.

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Craig G. BARTHOLOMEW, *Reading Ecclesiastes*. Old Testament Exegesis and Hermeneutical Theory (AnBib 139). Rome, Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 1998. viii-320 p. 16,5 × 24. \$30.00

This revised dissertation, originally written under the supervision of Gordon Wenham and Christopher Norris, casts a wide net. Its impetus comes from the growing pluralism in biblical studies and from the postmodern insistence that exegesis entails a variety of pre-exegetical commitments and presuppositions. The study is important because the positivist tradition which informs most historical criticism generally masks its religious and philosophical presuppositions under the guise of 'value-neutral' or 'objective' scholarship. Chapter 1 provides an overview of philosophical hermeneutics from Spinoza to Rorty with an emphasis on Gadamer who brought to light the inescapable roles of prejudice and tradition in all interpretation. This analysis argues that we cannot avoid the question of the relation of fundamental human commitments ('faith' if you will) to reason and interpretation.

The next five chapters are devoted to a critical account of pre-critical (Chapter 2), modern, and post-modern readings of Ecclesiastes as a concrete instance of the hermeneutical issues at stake. Bartholomew bases his account and analysis on a mixture of primary and judiciously chosen secondary sources (e.g., S. Toulmin's *Cosmopolis* on the nature of modernity), with primary sources coming to the fore in his treatment of

twentieth-century figures. This investigation is useful for biblical exegetes who are not themselves expert in hermeneutical theory, its philosophical roots, or the history of interpretation in the modern period. What is illuminating here is the frequent sense one gets of 'nothing new under the sun' in the readings of Ecclesiastes. These readings are clearly influenced by their religio-cultural milieu, but they also form a diversity of interpretative *traditions*, both in their 'results' and in the questions asked of the text. The latter fact is ironic because of the fundamental modern prejudice *against* tradition. Especially important is the modern development of a tradition of reading Ecclesiastes genetically, in terms of a variety of (contradictory) sources, *à la* the Pentateuch. Most persistent here is the opposition of the 'orthodox epilogist/s' to the apparently heterodox voice of 'Qohelet' in the rest of the text. In one form or another, this oppositional reading has persisted even when recent scholars have argued, under the influence of literary and canonical approaches, for the literary unity of the book's 'final form' (see for example the critique of B. Childs [106-107]).

Bartholomew's response, laid out in Chapter 7, is that a valid hermeneutics must consider the literary and theological as well as historical dimensions of the text. He demonstrates the same by showing how historical comparative method (Longman, Perdue, and Fox) leads to an understanding of the *genre* of Ecclesiastes as 'a developed wisdom form of the royal testament or fictional autobiography [the two are not mutually exclusive] cast in a frame-narrative'. At the same time, appealing to M. Sternberg's narrative approach to the Hebrew Bible, B. finds that interpreters have not adequately solved the problem of the tension between its grim focus on human limits and death on the one hand, and its *carpe diem* passages on the other. He argues that this tension creates 'gaps' which the reader must fill. Eccl 12 then provides the clue how these gaps should be filled: 'The resolution of this paradox is found in the fear of God (rejoicing and remembrance) which enables one to rejoice and apply oneself positively to life in the midst of all that one does not understand, including and especially death' (268). Thus, for B. the fundamental tension in the book lies between its dark focus on *hevel* and the positive *carpe diem* passages, not between the body of the book and the epilogue. Both 'Qohelet' (remember your creator) and the epilogue (fear God) ultimately resolve the tension in the same way. (Incidentally, B's careful analysis of Michael Fox's reading of the epilogue is especially illuminating, p. 157-163.)

As is usual when readers deal with a difficult book like Ecclesiastes, I find myself disagreeing with or questioning B. at a number of points. For instance, I am not convinced that Qohelet's use of 'wisdom' and 'heart' (חכמה and לב) are 'ironic' (232-237). Bartholomew seems to take these lexemes as rigid concepts that must be ironized to function in Qohelet's peculiar discourse. This view seems to go with his assumption that Qohelet employs a radically new 'empiricist' (perhaps Epicurean influenced) epistemology. But many statements made by Qohelet are not at all empirical but are faith utterances, such as Eccl 2,24b or 5,1, a fact which B. recognizes with reference to 2,12-15 (244). Perhaps the relation (creative tension?) between faith and (observational) reason in Qohelet requires more study.

Bartholomew's book will generate most controversy in its advocacy of

an explicitly Christian hermeneutic, even though he and others have made clear that a presuppositionless hermeneutic is impossible. His proposal, however, is not a totalitarian one: he urges that clarity about the diversity of presuppositional commitments actually makes genuine pluralistic dialogue possible. Here I wish B. had been less brief in laying out his proposal. Against the background of tyrannical readings of Scripture, more needs to be done, I think, to convince others that committed scholarship is not the same as obfuscation of the data or the religious legitimization of tyranny. Indeed, the obfuscation of data in the name of 'objective' scholarship itself ought to give us pause!

In a time of fragmentation and uncertainty concerning paradigms of interpretation, B's book may help the biblical guild become more self-critically aware of the presuppositions and agendas implicit in its practice of exegesis. It also assists us on our way to becoming more informed concerning the philosophical-hermeneutical options available to us. Finally, it argues for a genuinely pluralistic dialogue, in which fundamental differences of commitment are not masked but explicit, so that the quest for exegetical meaning can be conducted honestly.

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Novum Testamentum

Peter BALLA, *Challenges to New Testament Theology. An Attempt to Justify the Enterprise*. Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, 1997 – Peabody, MA, Hendrickson Publishers, 1998. xiv-279 p. 15,3 × 22,8.

Relever les défis lancés à la théologie du Nouveau Testament, tel est l'objectif de cet ouvrage de Peter Balla, version aménagée d'une thèse de doctorat soutenue devant l'université d'Édimbourg en 1994 (Direction: J.C. O'Neill).

Balla n'oublie pas les critiques jadis formulées par W. Wrede contre le concept même de théologie du Nouveau Testament. Mais le véritable point de départ de sa réflexion, c'est la monographie de Heikki Räisänen, *Beyond New Testament Theology: A Story and a Programme* (London – Philadelphia 1990). Pour Räisänen, la théologie du Nouveau Testament est une discipline pleinement légitime en milieu ecclésial; en revanche, dans un contexte académique plus large, il faut aller au-delà et proposer, dans une perspective strictement historique, une synthèse de la pensée chrétienne primitive. Face à cette prise de position, l'objectif premier de

Balla va être de montrer qu'il n'y a pas à aller, y compris en contexte universitaire, au-delà d'une théologie du Nouveau Testament, comprise comme une discipline de type avant tout historique et descriptif (211-215).

Pour Balla, il faut d'abord s'entendre sur le sens que l'on donne au mot «théologie». C'est l'objet du chapitre premier: «Relations entre interprétation historique et interprétation théologique dans les études néotestamentaires». En soi, l'étude historique n'exclut pas l'étude théologique; c'est le cas d'une théologie du Nouveau Testament menée dans la perspective que nous venons d'exposer à l'instant. Cela conduit sans doute à donner au concept de théologie un contenu plus large que celui de doctrine et à y introduire les expériences religieuses du groupe porteur; mais cette intégration des expériences religieuses doit demeurer au second rang par rapport à l'examen des énoncés de foi.

Pour relever les défis lancés par Wrede et Räisänen, il importe aussi de justifier, *d'un point de vue historique*, la focalisation de la discipline sur le canon néotestamentaire. Balla ne conteste pas qu'il est du devoir de l'historien d'examiner toute la documentation à sa disposition (224); mais ces différentes sources qui sont là devant lui, il se doit aussi de les critiquer, pour les apprécier et voir en quoi elles contribuent à notre connaissance effective du christianisme primitif. C'est dans ce contexte méthodologique que notre auteur en vient au chapitre deux, «Le christianisme primitif et ses écrits» (48-85), à traiter de la distinction entre orthodoxie et hérésie et à rejeter la thèse de Bauer sur l'antériorité de la seconde sur la première, ainsi que le concept de trajectoire tel que Koester l'instrumente. Pour Balla, «peut être maintenu le point de vue selon lequel les plus anciennes traditions étaient toutes, ou quasiment toutes, orthodoxes» (253). C'est incontestablement un des pivots centraux de la thèse qu'il soutient.

S'il en est historiquement ainsi, il est effectivement plus facile de justifier la focalisation sélective d'une enquête historienne sur le contenu théologique des livres du canon néotestamentaire. Cette justification constitue l'objet immédiat du chapitre trois du livre ici recensé, «Le canon peut-il être justifié?» (86-146). Balla commence par réfuter l'idée que la constitution d'un canon des écritures chrétiennes est une réaction tardive des communautés orthodoxes destinée à contrer l'initiative de Marcion en ce domaine. Dès avant Marcion, il y avait à l'intérieur des églises un processus de reconnaissance canonique en faveur d'un certain nombre d'écrits retenus comme normatifs. Et l'historien se doit de constater l'existence de ce choix canonique au terme d'un long processus de «maturation», au nom même des exigences de son métier.

Surgit alors sous les pas de Balla, la question classique de la diversité théologique du Nouveau Testament: serait-ce une diversité telle qu'elle rende impossible de parler de *la* théologie du Nouveau Testament? Dans sa conclusion générale, Balla reconnaît loyalement «qu'il y a des passages [non traités dans sa thèse] qui, manifestement tendraient à prouver qu'il y a de réelles contradictions» (253); mais le chapitre quatre est un plaidoyer en faveur de l'unité théologique du Nouveau Testament; celle-ci prend même la forme d'un credo de base, exégétiquement reconstituable (205), partagé par la grande majorité des premiers chrétiens. Non seulement la thèse des théologies contradictoires est rejetée, avec à l'appui une lecture

de Ep 2,15 compatible avec Mt 5,17 (187-192); mais aussi celle du développement théologique, avec à l'appui un commentaire de Ac 2,36 écartant une lecture adoptianiste du verset (159-165). Dans le même ordre d'idée, Balla rejette toute opposition radicale entre l'enseignement de Jésus, pour lui «une part nécessaire de la théologie du Nouveau Testament» (177), et la prédication de Paul où «l'annonceur est devenu l'annoncé» (155-159).

Le dernier chapitre de l'ouvrage (210-250) profile enfin les caractéristiques majeures d'une théologie du Nouveau Testament telle que l'auteur la conçoit: une discipline de type fondamentalement historique et descriptif pouvant intégrer à titre de compléments les apports des sciences du langage et des sciences sociales. Une interprétation actualisante de cette théologie peut intervenir dans un temps second, sans être indispensable à la démarche. Dans ce dernier chapitre, Balla laisse aussi transparaître la raison fondamentale de son opposition à Räisänen. Pour le premier nommé, si le second veut reléguer la théologie du Nouveau Testament dans le champ ecclésial, c'est qu'il pense qu'une interprétation historique et objective de la documentation sur les origines du christianisme donne une image de celui-ci qui «ne correspondrait pas aux enseignements de l'Eglise [actuelle]» (218). Pour Balla, au contraire, l'Eglise ne peut que bénéficier d'un enseignement plus proche de la «vérité historique»; d'autre part, les résultats de la recherche historique ne sont pas nécessairement aussi éloignés de l'enseignement de l'Eglise qu'on se complaît trop souvent à le dire (218). Un regard sur d'autres contributions récentes dans le même domaine (Childs, Morgan, Hübner, Stuhlmacher) permet enfin à l'auteur d'affiner sa conception d'une théologie du Nouveau Testament comme discipline universitaire pleinement légitime.

Cette présentation d'ensemble ne prétend pas donner un résumé de tout le contenu du livre; elle veut en faire saisir la problématique. Elle se voudrait aussi le point de départ d'une évaluation, où je m'efforcerai de faire entendre le point de vue du monde francophone, moins pris en considération par l'auteur.

Tout d'abord, le projet d'une théologie du Nouveau Testament se donnant comme objectif prioritaire de décrire, dans une perspective historique et non normative, le contenu théologique du Nouveau Testament, me paraît des plus légitimes. Il me semble même qu'une théologie du Nouveau Testament peut le faire plus naturellement qu'une théologie biblique englobant les deux Testaments, dans la mesure où cette dernière, de par ses choix fondamentaux, se situe d'entrée de jeu, dans le contexte particulier d'une mentalité chrétienne pour qui le Nouveau Testament est perçu «par définition» comme l'accomplissement de l'Ancien. Pour la même raison, le souci d'actualiser me paraît plus constitutif d'un projet global de théologie biblique que de celui d'une théologie du Nouveau Testament stricto sensu. Cela dit, il n'a jamais été interdit à un historien de signer son travail; je suis même de ceux qui pensent que, compte tenu du fait que l'objectivité absolue nous sera toujours inaccessible, il y va de la déontologie du chercheur de dire qui il est et où il demeure. Le tout, c'est qu'il soit bien clair que la «signature» ne se situe pas sur le même registre d'énonciation que le corps de l'exposé.

Personnellement, je ferai une part plus large que Balla aux apports

complémentaires des sciences du langage et des sciences sociales. Je perçois mal en particulier qu'une discipline qui se veut historienne *et descriptive* se prive des ressources offertes par les sciences du langage: le théologien ne peut ignorer tous les débats actuels sur l'écriture de l'histoire. Comme l'écrit F. Dosse, *L'histoire* (Cursus Philosophie, Paris 2000) 110: «La constitution de l'événement est tributaire de sa mise en intrigue». Voir aussi, A. Prost, *Douze leçons sur l'histoire* (Points H223, Paris 1996) 263.

Cette précision apportée, j'ajouterai que, de par la nature même du contenu du corpus étudié et du fait d'une élaboration progressive dont les traces demeurent jusque dans la forme finale, la théologie du Nouveau Testament non seulement peut, mais *se doit* d'être de type historique, si elle veut être fidèle à son objet. À ce propos, je constate déjà que les différents genres littéraires des écrits retenus dans le canon sont des genres gravitant autour de l'histoire. Les évangiles sont communément rattachés au genre littéraire des *bioi*; mais dans cette première section du canon a disparu, sous forme de livres indépendants, le genre littéraire des *logoi sophōn*, alors que l'on sait que ce genre littéraire a préexisté au genre évangile et qu'il a perduré pendant et au-delà du temps de rédaction de nos évangiles. De même, le genre littéraire des lettres porte la marque du caractère conjoncturel de leur production; plus remarquable encore, des écrits canoniques qui relèvent davantage du genre littéraire de l'épître ou traité (Romains), du discours d'exhortation (Hébreux), voire du genre apocalyptique (Apocalypse de Jean) contiennent eux aussi une section se rattachant au genre littéraire de la lettre. C'est une question que la théologie du Nouveau Testament ne peut pas esquiver: comment et pourquoi ces écrits délibérément présentés comme des écrits de circonstance sont-ils devenus les écrits canoniques de référence pour le corps social chrétien? Sinon, parce que ce corps social chrétien avait conscience du caractère éminemment historique du vécu, et du *contenu*, de sa foi.

C'est à la même conclusion que l'on arrive, lorsqu'on se penche sur les phénomènes de relectures et de réécritures si fréquents dans le Nouveau Testament. Ils permettent de vérifier sur pièces comment se met progressivement en place le processus de canonisation des écrits; car sur nous-mêmes, «notre action [et notre façon de procéder] en sait [et en dit] plus long que nous-mêmes» (P. Veyne, *Comment on écrit l'histoire* [Points H226, Paris, 1996] 254). Concrètement le procédé de relecture permet à la fois à l'historien de constater a posteriori qu'un texte plus ancien sert de référence et d'évaluer le degré de liberté que se permet la nouvelle instance éditoriale par rapport à ce texte-référence, soit pour le remplacer (cas des évangiles synoptiques), soit pour le recadrer (cas de l'évangile de Jean avec ses relectures internes). Or, que constatons-nous? Au moment de la fixation du canon, Marc a été conservé à côté de Matthieu, Luc et Jean; Colossiens à côté d'Éphésiens; Jude à côté de la 2-Petri; l'épître aux Romains n'a pas conduit à la mise à l'écart de la lettre aux Galates. Par le fait même, le canon du Nouveau Testament porte les marques d'une incontestable épaisseur historique, comme d'une pluralité de points de vue, qu'il ne faut pas s'acharner à vouloir à tout prix réduire, si l'on ne veut pas dénaturer le corpus.

Balla a raison de fustiger le malin plaisir de certains à souligner le

caractère soidisant irréductible de certaines oppositions à l'intérieur du Nouveau Testament ou à y tracer des trajectoires dont les dernières étapes désavouent les premières. Il n'en demeure pas moins que l'on peut y déceler des divergences et y tracer des trajectoires, pour le plus grand bénéfice de la théologie et de l'histoire. Reste bien sûr à identifier les frontières du compatible et les limites de l'interprétation; c'est ainsi que je pose prioritairement la question de l'orthodoxie et de l'hétérodoxie (cf 2 Th 2,2; 3,19; 2 Jn 9). Mais comment résister à la tentation de citer ici M. de Certeau? «Le langage chrétien n'a (et ne peut avoir) qu'une *structure communautaire*: seule la connexion de témoins [...] différents énonce une «vérité» qui ne peut être réduite à l'unicité par un membre, un discours ou une fonction. Parce que cette «vérité» n'appartient à personne, elle est dite par plusieurs...» (M. de Certeau, «La rupture instauratrice ou le christianisme dans la culture contemporaine», *Esprit* 39 [1971] 1204-1205). Pour une unité signifiante, le pluriel doit être maintenu.

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Sven HILLERT, *Limited and Universal Salvation. A Text-Oriented and Hermeneutical Study of Two Perspectives in Paul* (Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series 31). Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1999. 272 p. 15,6 × 22. SEK 206,—

This is a doctoral dissertation defended at the University of Uppsala. Hillert (= H.) investigates whether Paul's letters support or refute the belief in universal salvation. He distinguishes three levels of investigation. The first level is called exegetical (analysis). On the second theological level H. draws conclusions with regard to Paul's thinking. The third hermeneutical level evaluates the results and judges their consequences for contemporary theology (e.g., liberation theology). The dissertation moves mainly, but not only, on the two first levels. According to H. a second distinction is all-important. In dealing with Paul's eschatological statements, rather than speaking of different images, H. takes into account two perspectives, a dividing one which separates people into different groups and a uniting one which brings people into one category. Statements which seem to indicate division but appear in a predominantly by uniting perspective (e.g., Rom 2; Gal 5,13-6,10) cannot be used to prove final division. Moreover, theoretical arguments are often used strategically; they then function to influence a practical decision, for example, to strengthen the inclusion of Gentile Christians and to prevent division within the community. Such a strategical use means that a theoretical argument cannot be understood as an isolated statement or truth.

After the introductory exposition, chapters two and three examine in which perspective statements about justification by faith in Galatians and Romans (ch. 2) and election in Romans (ch. 3) are found. H. is of the opinion that no conclusions can be drawn from these passages concerning final division or ultimate salvation. The statements about justification by faith 'are used only within uniting perspectives, they cannot be said to indicate limited salvation. This result runs contrary to what has been argued by other scholars' (116). Notwithstanding the dividing perspective in Rom 9, the statements there, because of the relation between Rom 9 and Rom 10–11, do not indicate limited salvation. In Rom 11,25–26, verses which certainly belong to a uniting perspective, a belief in universal salvation *may* be indicated; however, 'the statements about the Gentiles cannot be shown to refer to all individuals' (151). Chapter 4 investigates passages of the two letters to the Corinthians which appear to affirm division. Paul could have had practical reasons for not adding limitations to some utterances of seemingly final division. In chapter 5 H. examines in particular statements in Rom 5,12–21; Phil 2,9–11 and 1 Cor 15: do they indicate a complete and final unity, an ultimate salvation? Since Paul does not discuss theology separately from practical problems, 'it is impossible to prove that the meaning of any specific statement is definitely salvation for all humanity' (233). In chapter 6 H. pays special attention to the reconstruction of Paul's thinking regarding the dividing and uniting perspectives and discusses the hermeneutical importance of his conclusions for contemporary theology.

The topic of this dissertation deals with universalism, a burning modern theological problem. Will there be a final division or can we hope for the ultimate salvation of all humanity? The reader follows H.'s overview of Paul's statements with great interest. The text of this dissertation is beautifully written, in a limpid style. Not too much 'technical' language is employed, although I tend to doubt that the use of the 'meta' terminology (meta-communicative clauses, meta-oppositional indicators, meta-propositional bases) is particularly helpful. The author is almost overly careful not to overstate his findings. During the composition of this work there must have been much meditation and reflection about the necessary distinctions. I think that H. rightly sees most γάρ's in Paul as really motivating particles. H. often and appropriately distinguishes between theme and argument. Most analyses are done in a compact yet insightful manner. Three examples of this approach may be presented. H. cogently shows how Gal 1,6 must be explained as containing the main thesis of the letter: you shall not desert the one who called you. H.'s view of Rom 1,16–17 is equally well founded; he shows the connection with what precedes and the subordinated function of what follows in 1,18–32 (see γάρ in v. 18): 'Wrath for all and justification by faith are thus not contrasted to each other, but the former is an *argument* for the latter' (98). With good — convincing? — arguments H. defends the logical unity of Rom 9–11. Paul must have considered the division that he emphasizes in ch. 9 as temporary; this is perhaps already indicated in the chapter itself. One wonders, however, that in this context nothing is said about 'predestination' (cf. J.M. GUNDRY-VOLF, *Paul and Perseverance. Staying in and Falling Away* [WUNT II/37; Tübingen 1990]). A number of other exegetical points are open to discussion.

I think, however, that there is one basic flaw in the composition of this work, a more or less hidden defect. On p. 99 H. writes: 'It is important to understand the difference between a statement that *all* who believe are justified and a statement that *only* those who believe are justified. Such statements would belong to different arguments and different perspectives in different contexts' (n. 163). But can one, in whatever context, forget that faith is *the* condition of justification and, therefore, that faith *always* includes a separation from the absence of faith, even if the unbelievers are not explicitly mentioned or focused upon? The dividing function may not be actualized, yet it remains really present. Moreover, the strategic use of an idea does not by itself invalidate its truth. To be sure, in Rom 1-4 Paul emphasizes the unity of Gentile and Jewish believers. Yet 'justification' is (the beginning of) salvation. It would seem that, according to Paul, salvation is impossible without faith in Christ. This implies, I would think, that in Paul's opinion most dividing statements imply a limited salvation and that the so-called universal statements in 1 Cor 15,22; Phil 2,11 and Rom 5,18 do not exclude a last judgment according to faith and deeds. There is also more (sometimes hidden) paraenesis in the Pauline letters than H. seems to be willing to accept.

Relatively few errors are present. We may refer to p. 222 where 'reception' should apparently be 'rejection' (l. 9 from below) and to the spelling of F. Thielman. I am surprised at the absence of any mention of the monograph by M.C. DE BOER, *The Defeat of Death. Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians and Romans 5* (JSNTSS 22; Sheffield 1988) which at the end strongly defends 'universal salvation'.

Even where agreement is impossible, one will remain grateful to H. for his surveys and for his discussion of the Pauline passages. Moreover, H. is right when he states that Paul's convictions will not escape what on p. 26 is called 'primary hermeneutics', i.e., evaluation by today's interpreters, content criticism (*Sachkritik*) included.

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Andrzej GIENIUSZ, *Romans 8:18-30: "Suffering Does Not Thwart the Future Glory"* (University of South Florida International Studies in Formative Christianity and Judaism 9). Atlanta, GA, Scholars Press, 1999. xiv-339 p. 16 × 23. Cloth: \$39.95

The role of the section making up chapters 5-8 of Paul's Letter to the Romans and, more specifically, the preoccupation with suffering that appears early in the section (5,3-4) and returns to become a major theme in 8,18-30 are matters that have never been satisfactorily explained. This doctoral dissertation under the direction of Jean-Noël Aletti at the Pontifical

Biblical Institute goes a long way towards remedying this defect. It is distinguished by a literary-rhetorical approach (closely adhering to that of Aletti himself), by the use of philological tools recently become available such as the TLG (*Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*), and by the thesis that the issue of suffering arises because Paul feels compelled to address a theory of retribution (arising out of Deuteronomy) in which suffering is a sure index of divine wrath.

The first two chapters of the work (13-88) address the task of correctly identifying the rhetorical disposition of both the macro-argument of Romans and the particular passage under discussion. Gieniusz concludes that Rom 5-8 constitutes a rhetorical subsection of the letter (with 5,20-21 as *propositio*). Within this wider framework, 8,18-30 forms a distinct unit, with v. 18 as *propositio*, vv. 19-27 as separate stages of the *probatio* and vv. 28-30 as *conclusio*. Within this pattern the small intermediate passage comprising 8,14-17 is something of a problem. G. detaches it from vv. 18-30 through a sustained critique of the somewhat complex analyses of I. de la Potterie and M. Vellanickal, both of whom do link the passage with what follows. In my opinion, the critique misses its mark in that it fails to address the central phenomenon suggesting a major turn in the argument between v. 13 and v. 14: namely, the distinct shift from the ethical tone prevalent in the entire section from 6,1-8,13 to the assertion of hope and the introduction of the theme of divine filiation in v. 14, both of which firmly tie the passage to what follows. G. appears to ignore this on account of a predetermined judgement that nothing must interfere with v. 18 standing as *propositio* for all that follows.

G. makes an outstanding contribution to the study of Romans by bringing the new philological tools of the TLG to the problematic v. 18 (90-100). Additional evidence from this source bolsters the claim of Plato, Gorgias 471.e to offer an enlightening parallel to Paul's οὐκ ἄξιός πρόσ expression. The upshot is a convincing conclusion that the sufferings of the present time are not simply being compared (unfavorably) with the glory that is to be revealed. The idiom suggests something much more forceful: that the sufferings do not have weight to oppose or 'thwart' (cf. the title) the attainment of the glory. The 'sufferings', in G.'s view are not specifically Christian sufferings (sufferings with Christ, as v. 17c for one thing might suggest). They are any kind of suffering (110), in particular the suffering that religious sensibility might see to be connected with retribution.

Here G. is driving at his distinctive thesis that Paul addresses the issue of suffering in Rom 8,18 not because suffering does not 'count' or because it may have a positive outcome (suffering being interpreted [wrongly in G.'s view] as 'Messianic Woes') but because, given the fact that sufferings continue in the time of justification, they might be taken as challenging the salvific 'already' of the present time, that is the time of 'peace' with God (5,1 [justification]; cf. 8,1: οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν κατὰκριμα). Paul is arguing for the certainty of the glory to be revealed in spite of the suffering that presently prevails (126, 130-131). Like Job in the wisdom tradition of the Old Testament he is challenging the Deuteronomistic theology of retribution (130-134).

The fact that there is no apparent alternative reason for Paul to introduce

the topic of suffering in his letter to Rome lends much plausibility to this argument. The paranetic section of the letter and the circumstantial details contained in the outer 'frames' (1,1-16; 15,14-16,23) do not suggest that the community was experiencing persecution to any great degree as indeed it was a few years later (64 CE). Hence the motive for dealing with suffering is essentially theological and, as G. suggests, part of the complex eschatological schema ('already-not yet') with which early Christianity had to cope. Nonetheless, as so often in Paul, there are other statements that would appear to temper the thesis proposed. The proviso added at the end of v. 17, with its distinctly christological note something which returns again in 8,29 suggests a closer causal connection between present suffering and future glory than G. is prepared to allow; the thought of 2 Cor 4,17 may not be all that distant. Hence, while G. may be right to argue that v. 18 states the proper theme of the passage that follows, I am not sure that the age-old problem of how best to resolve the tension across the transition from v. 17c to v. 18 has been resolved. In the case of believers, for whom alone, strictly speaking, the new age has dawned (in the shape of justification), does it make much sense to distinguish (101) between suffering in general (v. 18) and specifically Christian suffering (suffering with Christ: v. 17c)? All suffering both that which comes simply as part of the human lot and that which proceeds from Christian commitment can be seen as a challenge to the reality of the onset of salvation and hence as something which needs to be addressed theologically.

With respect to vv. 19-27 (the *probatio*), G.'s task is to show how each of the elements (vv. 19-22, vv. 23-25, vv. 26-27) serve to the 'dismantling' (138) of the principle of retribution. Along with most interpreters, G. notes that the passage divides according to three subjects that 'groan' ('creation', 'ourselves', 'the Spirit'). G., however, is firmly opposed to the suggestion with respect to any of the three cases of a positive aspect to the 'groaning'. Regarding the first subsection (vv. 19-22) G. argues that the Greek word ματαιότης alludes to Qoheleth and hence points to the absurdity of a situation: that it is contrary to reasonable expectation. What is absurd in the present case is the subjection of the non-human remainder of creation (κτίσις) to corruption and decay (an allusion to Gen 3,19) even though in itself quite inculpable (the meaning of οὐχ ἐκοῦσα in v. 20). This overthrows the principle of retribution. Moreover, because the subjection was done by God for God's exclusive purposes it could not be without hope of restoration (158-59). The case of creation shows, then, that suffering does not thwart the future glory but cries out for a hope and indeed does not happen without a future in view (taking v. 21 as an elucidation of the ἐφ' ἐλπίδι at the end of v. 20). Using, again, the TLG, G. shows that the verbs cognate with the rare ἀποκαταδοκία (v. 19; a Pauline coinage in G.'s view) suggest that it denotes a painful expectation, that is, an expectation that arises out of painful circumstances, while not uncertain of an eventual positive outcome. On the basis of a 'common fate' linkage between human and non-human creation (174) creation eagerly awaits in its present painful circumstances the revelation of 'God's sons' (v. 19) because that 'liberation' (v. 21) will signal its own liberation from bondage to decay.

The philological point about ἀποκαταδοκία is well taken. By excluding, however, all positive sense from the 'groaning' of creation (v. 22) and seeing it simply as a response to suffering, G. gets into trouble with the 'location', so to speak, of the hope. God may well be the principal agent and cause in the subjection of creation. But in this God can hardly be said to be the subject of the hope (v. 21). God does not hope (cf. v. 24b): God has a plan and God foresees. The hope then must be 'located' somehow in personified suffering creation. Its ἀποκαταδοκία, while arising out of painful circumstances, does contain a hope as G. concedes. And placing (v. 22) the expression of 'groaning' on the part of creation after all this talk of hope suggests that Paul does intend such groaning to be in some way expressive of a restlessness redolent with hope. Otherwise, it would have made much more logical sense to state the fact upon which the sub-argument rests: the travail of creation (v. 22) first (as v. 19) and not where it becomes, on G's. interpretation, an afterthought. I am not, then, as convinced that the fresh elements which G. has brought to the interpretation of this sub-section (concerning ἐκούσα and ἀποκαταδοκία, in particular) are as incompatible with my own interpretation as he suggests (183-184).

G. is also somewhat ambivalent about what he terms the 'cosmological' interpretation of the passage. On the one hand, he insists (rightly, in my view) that ecological concern, that is to say something about the fate of creation is not Paul's primary purpose (185). He is also at pains to deny that creation's bondage to decay is a result of Adam's fall (165) though the later acceptance of the 'common fate' principle seems at odds with this. But as regards the future, G. finds in Paul here the vision of a future of creation radically incompatible with its annihilation, in fact a vision of 'radical transformation' (288). But surely this is to derive a significant cosmological view from the passage. Such a reading is valid and legitimate, even if it be not the only or even the central reading.

With respect to the second stage of the argument, vv. 23-25 (187-209), G. at first declares himself firmly opposed to any view which would play down the element of suffering in believers' groaning (στενάζομεν, v. 23) to emphasize the hope that awaits them. Insisting upon the objective aspect of the ἐλπίς, G. asserts that it is precisely the prospect of the future that so heightens the eschatological tension as to be that which actually produces the suffering of believers, a situation (ὑπομονή) that then elicits the subjective attitude of hope. But no appeal to the 'paradoxical' nature of Paul's thought (202, 206) can mask the special pleading this convoluted interpretation requires: hope produces suffering and then suffering gives rise to hope. One suspects that here G. is overstraining things for the sake of being different. Paul makes clear (v. 23) that the suffering of believers proceeds from their bodily captivity to the conditions of the present age. The gift of the Spirit may intensify the suffering of believers in that it aggravates the tension between their present lot and the liberation (redemption of the body) which they rightly see to be appropriate to their filial status. But in this very aggravation there is a restlessness which itself becomes a grounds for hope that suffering will not have the last word (the thesis of v. 18). As in 2 Cor 1,22 and 5,5 (parallels which G. largely

ignores in the this context) and also 1 Cor 2,9-12, it is the Spirit which engenders and sustains hope, a hope which needs to be sustained precisely because it cannot be seen (vv. 24b-25).

In the final element of the *probatio* (vv. 26-27) G. plausibly argues that the 'weakness' or 'prayer problem' of believers, wherein the Spirit comes to their aid is not precisely an inability to grasp the future destiny but, more accurately (cf. esp. καθὸ δέῃ), a not knowing whether it is appropriate or not in suffering circumstances to pray for liberation from that suffering (cf. Paul's dilemma in Phil 1,22b-24). Our sufferings, then, in the present time are not to be interpreted as a penalty but only an occasion in which we may experience the presence and the assistance of God's Spirit himself (220). The development of this in v. 27, also shows, with a possible allusion to Job 16,18-21, that God in the person of the Spirit actually participates in believers' groaning and identifies with this suffering. In this climactic way, in precisely the legal context that the retributive view conjures up, the overthrow of that interpretation of suffering becomes complete. There is much that is fresh and interesting here, though Paul's conception of the actual relationship between God and the Spirit remains problematic.

With respect to the *conclusio* of the entire argument (249-84), G. is at pains to stress (particularly against my own interpretation) that v. 28 (G. favors seeing God as subject) is not to be associated with the preceding section but forms, along with vv. 29-30, the proper concluding unit stressing the certainty of glory in the unfolding plan of God. But the connection of v. 28 to the preceding remains problematic. The opening οἶδαμεν could introduce a concluding comment on the intercession of the Spirit — like the οἶδαμεν in v. 22 at the conclusion of the 'groaning of creation' section. If it begins the true conclusion we might have expected the conjunction οὖν as second word of the sentence rather than the far more ambiguous δέ. G. may be too controlled by the verse divisions. The process of conclusion may in fact begin with the final phrase of v. 28 τοῖς κατὰ πρόθησιν κλητοῖς, which introduces the all-important notion of God's inexorably unfolding plan, the spring of the entire conclusion. None of this, however, injures G.'s essential point that Paul, in the face of a retributive view of suffering, is deploying a vision in which God incorporates suffering into a plan for human beings that is inexorably salvific rather than retributive in nature.

The thesis is closely argued overall; interaction with alternative points of view is exhaustive, at times exhausting! Nonetheless, one is never in doubt at any stage as to what G. means and summaries at the end of every significant section build up a sense of how the various parts contribute to the whole. Also, despite an occasional stylistic infelicity (e.g., the reference to the Iliad and the Odyssey in the non-anglicized form of 'Ilias' and 'Odyssea' [70]; also 'Aristoteles' for Aristotle [8n]), the presentation from an author writing in a language very different from his own is remarkably clear.

The thesis as a whole treats Romans, or at least the bulk of the letter, as a theological presentation of the gospel. Save for a few sentences dealing with the position of chapters 5-8 within the wider context of the letter, G.

never attempts to relate his interpretation to the likely situation of its audience in Rome or to ask why, in a letter so otherwise preoccupied with the relative position of Jews and Gentiles in the renewed people of God, Paul felt obliged to treat of the issue of suffering at such length. The work rather stands aside, then, from issues and controversies more typical of Romans scholarship in recent years.

While, as noted above, there are places (especially in connection with neglect of 8,14-17 and 8,23-25) where it lacks conviction, this is a substantial contribution to the interpretation of Paul's most significant letter. Approaching a familiar and well-mined section of the letter from a fresh angle that is theologically coherent and rich, it compels re-examination of many details the interpretation of which more conventional exegesis might have considered settled. In the face of the heavy overlay of interpretation any student of Romans has to confront, this is a remarkable achievement. The author, and his distinguished director, must be congratulated for a contribution to the study of Romans which no subsequent interpreter or commentator can afford to neglect.

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Thomas L. THOMPSON, *The Bible in History*. How Writers Create a Past. London, Jonathan Cape, 1999. xx-412p. £25.00

Dieses neue Werk von Th.L. Thompson will durch den Verzicht auf einen wissenschaftlichen Anmerkungsapparat und durch eine recht flüssige Schreibweise die äußerst provokanten und häufig Widerspruch hervorruhenden Thesen des Autors einem breiteren Publikum vorstellen. In einem Vorwort beschreibt der gebürtige Amerikaner Thompson seinen eigenen wissenschaftlichen Werdegang, der ihn von einem überzeugten Vertreter der Historizität der Patriarchenerzählungen durch Überprüfung der einschlägigen Quellen zu einem Skeptiker und Minimalisten hinsichtlich der historischen Glaubwürdigkeit dieser Texte machte. Im Verlauf der Studien für seine Doktorarbeit stellte er fest, dass viele außerbiblische Quellen von den Alttestamentlern einseitig und oft nicht glaubwürdig interpretiert wurden, stets mit der offensichtlichen Absicht, den biblischen Text und damit die "Wahrheit" der Bibel zu stützen. Die 1971 in Tübingen an der katholischen Fakultät eingereichte Arbeit führte nicht zu einem erfolgreichen Abschluß, eine Publikation in Amerika war ebenfalls unmöglich. Erst 1974 konnte das Buch in der Reihe BZAW publiziert

werden, 1976 erhielt Thompson schließlich von der Temple University in Philadelphia seinen Ph.D. Eine wissenschaftliche Weiterbeschäftigung an einer amerikanischen Universität war ihm danach jedoch zunächst verwehrt, da seine Thesen auf breite Ablehnung stießen. Noch stärker als bei diesem Erstlingswerk war die Reaktion auf sein 1992 erschienenes Buch "The Early History of Israel" mit einer Bestreitung der Existenz eines vereinigten Königreiches unter David und Salomo. Die ablehnende Resonanz führte ihn schließlich nach Kopenhagen, wo er in N.P. Lemche einen Mitstreiter fand. Mit anderen Worten: Thompson ist gewissermaßen ein "gebranntes" Kind, das für seine Thesen zunächst erhebliche Kritik einstecken mußte, inzwischen aber erlebt, dass er mit seinen Thesen in einer veränderten Forschungslandschaft nicht mehr völlig allein ist. Das zu rezensierende Buch ist gewissermaßen eine Auseinandersetzung Thompsons mit seinen Kritikern, die ihm das Leben schwer machten. Dies macht der Untertitel des Buches "How Writers Create the Past" hinreichend deutlich.

Thompsons grundlegende These ist, dass wir im Alten Testament keinerlei zuverlässige historische Quellen haben. Er begründet dies vorwiegend mit form- und traditionsgeschichtlichen Argumenten. Aber auch außerbiblische Texte können nicht ohne weiteres als historische Quellen angesehen werden. Die Meschastele weist beispielsweise formale Ähnlichkeiten zur Inschrift Idrimis oder zu Texten Sargons auf. Demnach haben festgefügte formale Elemente die Meschainschrift geprägt, nicht aber reale und zuverlässige historische Ereignisse. Auf Bibeltex te angewandt heißt das z. B., dass der Durchzug durch das Schilfmeer sich in analoger Gestaltung noch einmal in Jos 3,7-17 findet. Beide Texte sind wegen der formalen Parallelen nicht als historische Berichte zu verstehen, sondern historisierende Umsetzungen der Botschaft von Gen 1,9, wonach Gott das Wasser an einem Ort sammelte. Ein Mythos wie Gen 1 wird gewissermaßen durch die Wiedergabe in der Form von Geschichtserzählungen historisiert. Er gewinnt damit aber noch keinen historischen Stellenwert, sondern bleibt eine andere Form von mythischer Wiedergabe. Desweiteren führt Thompson an, dass Ereignisse mehrfach mit unterschiedlichem Verlauf und unterschiedlichen Schwerpunkten (z. B. im deuteronomistischen und chronistischen Geschichtswerk, aber auch bei Josephus) überliefert sind, ohne dass für all diese Überlieferungen ein gleichwertiger Anspruch auf historische Wahrheit postuliert werden kann. Die biblischen Autoren wollten mit ihren Geschichtsdarstellungen offenbar nicht *history*, sondern nur *story* schreiben. Dies alles führt Thompson schließlich zu der programmatischen Einsicht: "The Bible doesn't deal with what happened in the past. It deals with what was thought, written and transmitted within an interacting intellectual tradition" (34). Folglich müssen die Texte auch durchweg als rein literarische Erzählung ohne historischen Hintergrund interpretiert werden. Thompson führt dies durch, indem er einzelne Geschichten nacherzählt und so deren erzählerische Aussage, Glaubensinhalte und -absichten (die u. U. aus viel älteren Zeiten stammen können) herausarbeitet.

In seinem zweiten Teil bietet Thompson eine auf Textquellen verzichtende Entwicklungsgeschichte Palästinas seit 1.400.000 v. Chr., die er immer wieder mit Randbemerkungen versieht, wie Historiker in früheren Zeiten die geschichtlichen Ereignisse einseitig und falsch mit dem Alten

Testament in Verbindung brachten. Mit seiner Darstellung der Geschichte des Landes will Thompson offenbar den Anspruch an eine wertfreie Geschichtsdarstellung erfüllen. Letztendlich kann er dies aber nicht leisten, denn auch seine Geschichtsdarstellung ist von der Auswahl und Gewichtung der herangezogenen Fakten, aber auch von seinem eigenen Verständnis von Geschichte abhängig. Trotz seiner Skepsis findet man beispielsweise die (wahrscheinlich richtige, aber nicht zu beweisende) These, dass in der (quellenarmen) Frühbronzezeit die Allianzen zwischen den Städten sehr zerbrechlich und auf besondere Notlagen begrenzt waren. Manche Thesen lassen sich sogar ziemlich sicher widerlegen. So dürfte es im 15. Jh. v. Chr. keine Straße von En-Gedi nach Jericho entlang des Toten Meeres gegeben haben. Die heutige Straße stammt erst aus der Zeit nach dem 2. Weltkrieg, etwas weiter westlich ist ein Weg parallel zur Küstenlinie des Toten Meeres in der Judäischen Wüste archäologisch erst für die Eisenzeit belegt. Auch verband im 15. Jh. der ostjordanische Königsweg noch nicht die Regionen Edoms, Moabs, Ammons und Gileads miteinander; der von Thompson postulierte Handel auf dieser Straße dürfte im 15. Jh. v. Chr. mangels Abnehmer — das Land war nur sehr dünn besiedelt — kaum von überregionaler Bedeutung gewesen sein. Durch den Verzicht auf jegliche Literaturangabe bleiben manche Thesen auch höchst unklar. Wenn Thompson auf S. 156 etwa angibt, dass der Untergang der spätbronzezeitlichen Stadtstaatenkultur zum Teil durch Erdbeben, zum Teil aber auch durch militärische Gewalt und Rebellion verursacht wurde, dann wüßte man gerne, welche Ursache nachweislich für welche Stadt herangezogen werden kann. Hier wird viel mehr postuliert, als durch gediegene Forschung bisher nachgewiesen werden kann. Thompson entwirft sich hier sein eigenes Geschichtsbild, und zwar in genau derselben Art, wie er es anderen vorwirft. Für die Periode vom 1000-600 v. Chr. betont Thompson den allmählichen wirtschaftlichen Aufschwung der Region Palästinas vor allem auf Grund des Olivenanbaus bzw. Ölhandels und die zunehmende Beteiligung am internationalen Handel. Die Bauern suchten für die internationale Vermarktung ihrer Produkte einen zentralen Verwaltungsort, der wahrscheinlich in Samaria angesiedelt wurde. Eine der führenden Familien war das "Haus Omris". Eine Geschichte Jerusalems läßt sich erst ab der Eisenzeit II schreiben, da für die frühere Zeit bislang keine archäologischen Daten zur Verfügung stehen. Erst 701 v. Chr., nach dem Untergang von Lachisch, wurde aus dem Provinzflecken Jerusalem "a small city", die als Hauptstadt des in assyrischen Texten erwähnten Judas agierte. Abgesehen von kurzen Überlegungen zur Siedlungsgeschichte und zu den Handelsbeziehungen ist aber auch für die Eisenzeit II nach dem Verständnis von Thompson wenig auszusagen.

Selbst für die Perserzeit und ihre Rückkehrmöglichkeit in die ursprüngliche Heimat nimmt Thompson an, dass keine gesicherten historischen Überlieferungen vorliegen. Die Rückkehr in das Gelobte Land wird in Jes 44-45; 2 Chr 36; Esr 1 und 1 Esdras 2 berichtet, ohne dass man von vier verschiedenen Rückwanderungen ausgehen kann. In den Texten werden Kyros und die Perser pauschal als Retter beschrieben, Assyryer und Babylonier dagegen einseitig als Zerstörer charakterisiert, und zwar unabhängig von der historischen Realität. Daher sind auch für diese

Epoche die biblischen Texte historisch nicht tragfähig. Dies führt Thompson dann zu folgendem Schluß: "Much like the traditions relating to the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportations of its population, the stories of return are far more useful for what they imply than for what they say. They imply a religious self-understanding and a self-perception based on a tradition of political propaganda that was created for very anti-historical purposes. What actually happened ... is not specifically known". Die Aussagen der Bibel sind nach Thompson deshalb jedoch nicht von ihrer theologischen Relevanz her falsch, sie sind nur keine *historischen* Aussagen.

In einem dritten Gedankengang will Thompson der Stellung der Bibel in der Geschichte nachspüren. Der Psalter, aber auch viele andere weisheitlich inspirierte Bücher des AT haben ein klares Schwarz-Weiß-Denken. Auf der einen Seite steht der Fromme, der den Weg Jahwes geht und der deshalb vom Erfolg gekrönt ist, auf der anderen Seite sind die Gegner des Frommen und damit auch die Gegner Jahwes. Diese Theologie eines richtigen Weges, den es einzuschlagen gilt, durchzieht auch die Geschichtsbücher des AT. Die dortigen Vorbilder rufen zur Nachahmung auf; wer deren Weg nachfolgt, wird von der Hoffnung her leben können.

Für die Entstehungsgeschichte des AT ist nun von Belang, dass die Funde aus Qumran die bislang ältesten Originaltexte des AT darstellen. Sie zeigen an, dass im 2. Jh. v. Chr. die Bildung der biblischen Bücher noch im Fluß war. Thompson geht davon aus, dass es alte Traditionen und Fragmente gab (z. B. Genealogien in der Genesis, Bileamgeschichte, Überlieferungen von Fluterzählungen, die u. U. sogar noch aus dem 2. Jt. v. Chr. stammen können!), die dann zunächst überarbeitet wurden mit der Absicht, einen exklusiven Monotheismus zu betonen, und schließlich zu einer weiteren Überarbeitung mit dem Ziel der Herausarbeitung eines inklusiven Monotheismus (Eingliederung polytheistischer Traditionen zur Beschreibung des Göttlichen) führten. Da dieser Wachstumsprozeß noch im 2. Jh. im vollen Gange war und auch die älteren Texte allenfalls Traditionen, aber nicht literarisch bereits im Sinne einer Quellenschicht vorlagen, müssen die biblischen Texte als Primärquelle (!) zum Verständnis des Hellenismus in der Region Palästinas herangezogen werden.

In einem weiteren Gedankengang beschäftigt sich Thompson mit der Frage der Literalität im alten Israel. Während in der Spätbronzezeit die Schreibkunst im wesentlichen auf Verwaltungstexte am Hof und diplomatische Korrespondenzen beschränkt blieb, nimmt Thompson an, dass im 1. Jt. v. Chr. zunehmend breitere Bevölkerungsschichten lesen und schreiben konnten. In der assyrischen Zeit wurden umfangreiche Bibliotheken zu einer Prestigeangelegenheit, in der persischen und hellenistischen Zeit wurde die Erfassung der jeweiligen lokalen Kultur von der Staatsseite her ausgebaut, um die nationalen und ethischen Besonderheiten der einzelnen Regionen besser erfassen zu können. Thompson nimmt an, dass in dieser Zeit einige Schreiber den festgehaltenen Traditionen eine höhere Glaubwürdigkeit verleihen wollten, indem sie diese in eine längst vergangene Zeit versetzten. Dass man dabei unter rein historischen Gesichtspunkten recht willkürlich vorgegangen sei, belegen nach Thompson die vielen Parallelen und vergleichbaren Strukturen. So haben Noah und Terach jeweils drei Söhne; ebenso gibt es mit Abraham,

Isaak und Jakob drei Erzväter. Sowohl der Tod Sauls als auch der Goliats oder etwa die Eroberung von Jerusalem oder Lachisch werden jeweils dreimal überliefert. Andererseits gibt es auffällige Paarkonstruktionen, die auf einen geplanten Aufbau hinweisen: Saul und Jonatan, David und Salomo, Elija und Elischa, Johannes und Jesus usw. Die Beobachtung, dass in 4QTest verschiedene biblische Texte neu zusammengestellt wurden, führt ihn zu der These, dass biblische Texte, Traditionen und Themen, aber auch einzelne (Halb-)Verse frei kombinierbar seien. Als (Neu-)Däne bezeichnet er diesen Umgang mit einzelnen Blöcken und Motiven als "Kopenhagener Lego-Stein-Modell". Durch die freie Kombination einzelner "Steine" konnte man so neue Textzusammenhänge schaffen, einzelne Geschichten durch geringfügige Änderungen in neue Geschichten umgestalten und z. B. auch einzelne Psalmentexte durch Aufnahme anderer Psalmenelemente zu neuen Psalmen gestalten. Dieses "Lego-Stein-Modell" ist zweifelsohne eine recht ansprechende Charakterisierung des Schriftpinzips, wie es in den jüngsten Schriften des AT angewandt wurde. Manche Beobachtung Thompson's zur Endgestalt des AT (aber auch nur zu dieser) ist durchaus hilfreich und ansprechend. Die Kombination einzelner Textelemente setzt jedoch voraus, dass diese schon länger bekannt waren. 4QTest setzt ja voraus, dass die zugrundegelegten Textblöcke bereits in einer — wie auch immer gestalteten — Art bereits vorgelegen haben müssen. Die entscheidende Frage stellt Thompson aber nicht: Welche redaktionsgeschichtliche Absicht steht hinter der neuen Zusammenstellung von z. T. leicht abgeänderten biblischen Texten? Warum wurden in diesem Fall Prophetengesetz, Bileamorakel und Levispruch miteinander kombiniert? Dass man in der Spätzeit mit Hilfe von Schriftzitaten göttlich legitimierte Theologie treiben wollte, ist eine Erkenntnis, die längst zum handwerklichen Allgemeingut eines jeden Exegeten zählen sollte. Lediglich postulieren, nicht aber beweisen kann Thompson, dass ein Text wie z. B. Dtn ähnlich frei komponiert wurde wie 4QTest.

Da das ganze AT nach Thompson ein Produkt des 3. – 1. Jh.s v. Chr. ist, stehen AT und NT nahezu auf dem gleichen kulturellen Hintergrund, was zu einem völlig neuen Verständnis einer "biblischen Theologie" führt. Die in der gesamten Bibel enthaltene Texte kommentieren sich gewissermaßen gegenseitig und müssen daher mit neuen Augen gelesen werden. Letztendlich geht es Thompson mit seinem Entwurf um eine hermeneutische Grundlegung einer Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments, die ohne zeitliche Fixierung und damit ohne geschichtlichen Hintergrund auskommt. Biblische Texte sollen *allein* als theologische Texte verstanden werden, und nur als solche haben sie eine bedeutende Aussage. Damit nähert sich Thompson einer Interpretation an, die allein von der Bedeutung des Endtextes ausgeht und dessen zeitlos gültige Botschaft untersuchen will.

Einige entscheidende Fragen bleiben m. E. jedoch unbeantwortet und müssen von der zukünftigen Forschung der Kopenhagener Kollegen Lemche und Thompson, aber auch von den übrigen Vertretern der alttestamentlichen Zunft noch präziser beschrieben werden. Zum einen handelt es sich um die Kriterien der historischen Glaubwürdigkeit biblischer Überlieferungen. Nicht jedem Text ist seine Situierung in einer konkreten historischen Situation zu bestreiten, die vor dem 3. – 1. Jh. v. Chr. liegt. Zudem dürfte es schwer

fallen, eine zeitgeschichtliche Entwicklung innerhalb dieser 3 Jahrhunderte zu entwerfen, in der alle alttestamentlichen Texte mit ihrer jeweiligen Aussageabsicht sinnvoll verankert werden können. Gelingt dies aber nicht und ist somit für einen Teil der Texte ein höheres Alter anzunehmen, müssen die Kriterien näher bestimmt werden, wie ein formal gleicher Aufbau und die den Texten innewohnende Propaganda von einem beschriebenen historischen Ereignis separiert werden können. Hierbei gilt es m. E. zu beachten, dass auch außerbiblische Texte eine ganz bewußte Propaganda beinhalten, diese dadurch aber keineswegs von vornherein unhistorisch eingeschätzt werden können. Des weiten muß eine vertiefte Reflexion darüber einsetzen, was die angeblich so wertfreien archäologischen Ergebnisse eigentlich leisten können. Auch jeder Archäologe interpretiert aufgrund seines Vorverständnisses. So konnten beispielsweise die berühmten Pfeilerbauten als Ställe, Kasernen, Lagerräume, Markthallen oder als Gebäude mit multifunktionalen Zwecken angesehen werden. Die derzeitige Diskussion um die Einordnung der früheisenzeitlichen Schichten in eine absolute Chronologie mahnt ebenfalls zur Vorsicht vor einer Überschätzung archäologischer Funde. Zum dritten scheint mir Thompson die redaktionsgeschichtliche Forschung nicht ausreichend berücksichtigt zu haben. Hier wurden in den vergangenen Jahren zahlreiche wichtige Erkenntnisse formuliert, die den Entstehungsprozess biblischer Schriften bis hin zur Endredaktion in spätnachexilischer Zeit beschreiben können. Der nahezu völlige Verzicht auf literarkritische Studien, die deutlich ein längeres Entwicklungsstadium biblischer Texte aufweisen, stellt ein erhebliches Manko dar, das m. E. letztendlich zu schweren Fehlinterpretationen führt.

Thompson will eine Hermeneutik entwickeln, die am theologischen Wert der Bibel festhalten kann, ohne auf der historischen (und u. U. auch widerlegbaren) "Echtheit" der Bibel bestehen zu müssen. Die Bibel ist nicht wahr, weil die in ihr erzählten Geschichten historisch zuverlässig und zutreffend sind, sondern weil die in der Bibel vermittelten Aussagen und Inhalte wahr sind. Insofern ist ihm durchaus zuzustimmen. Seine oft durchaus anregenden hermeneutischen Überlegungen führen aber dazu, dass er auf alle Fragen zur Historizität und zur Entstehung biblischer Texte über einen längeren Zeitraum hinweg ganz verzichten will. Das AT wird allein noch in seiner Endgestalt gewürdigt. Für all jene, die die Thesen von Thompson und seinem Kopenhagener Mitstreiter N.P. Lemche noch nicht kennen, ist dieses Buch sicherlich ein gelungener Einstieg, der zu einer kritischen Auseinandersetzung mit den dort vertretenen Thesen herausfordert. Ob die Einseitigkeit der Darstellung im Wissenschaftsbetrieb auf Dauer sich durchsetzen wird, bezweifelt der Rezensent jedoch. Immerhin ist das Buch eine Herausforderung, offene Fragen noch genauer zu durchdenken und zu klären.

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